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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THEMES IN THE LATE PLAYS OF BERNARD SHAW

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1964

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
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Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

In his preface to the plays of Brieux, Shaw writes, "Drama does not merely photograph nature but attempts a presentation in parable of the conflict between man's will and his environment."¹ This quotation aptly describes the form which this thesis takes. The first chapter deals with the manifestations of the Life Force in the gifted individual. The second part describes some aspects of the environment which inhibit the free expression of the individual's will. It is not nature which provides obstacles in Shaw's plays, but the form of society, particularly capitalistic democracy, which is a kind of collective antagonist. Shaw proposes socialism as the form of government which offers the greatest opportunity for the development of the individual.

The third chapter deals with problems which arise, not as a result of man's conflict with his inner self or with other individuals, but with his outward rebellion against the ancient institutions and outmoded conventions of his society. Finally, there is a discussion of the duality present in Shaw's treatment of his themes, a conflict between intellect and intuition in his acknowledged role, that of the didactic artist.

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'My plays are mixtures of seventeenth century rhetoric, of modern thought and of that barbarous English humour which shocked Voltaire in Shakespeare. They are full of politics, religion, biology and all sorts of terrestrial things except adultery. They contain no traitors, no duels, no misunderstandings nor dramatic plots; and when the question of passions between the two sexes arises, it is the real thing, not the convention which holds its stead on your modest boulevards.'

PREFACE

This thesis proposes to examine the themes in the late plays and prefaces of Bernard Shaw. Shaw was sixty-seven years old in 1923 when he wrote St. Joan, one of his greatest works. The plays to be considered here are the ones that Shaw wrote after this date, in the remaining twenty-seven years of his life. An age of senility for most men, this was for Shaw a period of declining powers in which he repeats what he has said or hinted at with greater vigor and more sustained argument in the earlier years. This study attempts to set down what Shaw was talking about at the end of his life. A comparison with earlier writings is not attempted since this would involve a much more detailed and ambitious survey; however, there are several references to St. Joan, Man and Superman, and Back to Methuselah, and also some of the essays on socialism. These references are intended to clarify Shaw's statements with regard to some of his ideas. Further, the thesis is concerned with revealing the many points of view which are presented in the plays, without attempting to prove which of these were Shaw's own beliefs.

The thesis is divided into four chapters as follows:

Chapter I The Individual and the Life Force

Chapter II Society as Government

Chapter III The Individual in the Social framework

Chapter IV Conclusion

The plays dealt with are the following:

1. The Apple Cart (1929)
2. Too True To Be Good (1932)
3. On the Rocks (1933)
4. The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles (1934)
5. The Millionairess (1936)
6. Geneva (1938)
7. In Good King Charles's Golden Days (1939)
8. Buoyant Billions (1947)
9. Farfetched Fables (1948)

As an aid to the reader, quotations from the plays are given with the page number placed immediately after in parentheses. These references are to The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw, London: Odhams Press Limited, 19___. Other references will be found in footnotes appended to the thesis. The reader might note some peculiarities of spelling in the quotations, such as "spunge" for sponge, "shew" for show, and "oneanother" for one another, although this latter compound is not used consistently. Shaw's omission of the apostrophe in contractions is generally noted, but there are exceptions here, no doubt printers' errors, as Shaw was meticulous about his copy. In the quotation on page 74, for instance, "I've" is spelled once with the apostrophe and twice without it.

I

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE LIFE FORCE

1. Introduction

Shaw was born in 1856, three years before the publication of The Origin of Species. He grew to manhood amid the controversy fired by the publication of Darwin's great scientific work. Although the seeds of the theory of evolution had been sown by such illustrious progenitors as Aristotle and Bacon, and more recently by Buffon, Erasmus Darwin, and Lamarck, this complex study, presaged by the publicity accorded to the joint statement presented by Darwin and Wallace to the Linnaean Society the year before, burst upon the Victorian scene with a seemingly incontrovertible authority. Darwin attacked the view that the various species of animals are direct creations of the Deity, and are therefore eternal and unchanging; this idea had had a history of hoary antiquity and was buttressed by a formidable array of theological arguments and several important philosophical concepts such as the doctrine of universals, essences, and teleology. Darwin proposed that all life is descended from some few progenitors; further, the immense fecundity of nature points to a ceaseless struggle for survival in which only the fittest remain, these transmitting to their offspring the modifications which

contributed to their survival: the result of this incessant struggle is progress, the creation of newer, bigger, better, more beautiful forms.

Darwin's ideas struck at the heart of orthodox religion. A god of change eliminated all purpose, planning, and end for man; certainty was replaced by a tenuous faith or none. The romantic ideal of a joyous nature was proved to be false, and Tennyson's image of a natural world "red in tooth and claw" appeared to be substantiated by scientific proof. Needless to say reactions were strong. There was a reaffirmation of the religious view by Paley, and a re-examination of earlier writings on evolution by numerous scholars, one of the most vociferous of whom was Samuel Butler.

Butler was at first a follower of Darwin, but, having examined the history of evolutionary thought, he reversed his position. In numerous writings, he analyzed the contributions of the earliest evolutionists, and having studied the conclusions of Buffon, Erasmus Darwin, and Lamarck, adopted their philosophy. (Unlike Darwin, the followers of Lamarck insisted that animals adapt to their environments and that these adaptations are eventually transmitted to members of their offspring.) The important factor in evolution is use or disuse: living organisms must either adapt themselves to changing conditions or disappear. Offspring transmit the

adaptations, by means of which they survived, to their descendants. Lamarck stated that new organs were developed as a result of need. Unfortunately, as Butler points out, the first English translation erred in writing 'desires' for Lamarck's 'besoins'; this mistake placed his theory in a realm of speculation which was not intended by the French naturalist, and was perhaps instrumental in depriving Lamarck of the recognition as a responsible man of science, which he justly deserved.¹ Shaw chose, by error or design, to adopt this interpretation as the core of his philosophy: man can become what he wills. In Man and Superman (1903), Don Juan says:

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self understanding. It was the supremacy of this purpose that reduced love for me to the mere pleasure of a moment, art for me to the mere schooling of my faculties, religion for me to a mere excuse for laziness since it had set up a God who looked at all the world and saw that it was good, against the instinct in me that looked through my eyes at the world and saw that it could be improved. (385)

Like Darwin, Lamarck refrained from postulating the action of any informing purpose or plan to account for changes in the species.

Shaw's Life Force is not a new concept. It has affinities with the philosophies of Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Lamarck, and most directly with the belief of Bergson in a tremendous

irresistible energy that is striving to realize itself through matter and is persistently changing and developing by trial and error into a god.

Shaw's Life Force is Bergson's *élan vital*,

this current of life, traversing the bodies it has organized one after another, passing from generation to generation . . . divided among species and distributed among individuals without losing anything of its force rather intensifying in proportion to its advance.²

Variation is being produced every moment, continuously and insensibly in every living being. There is much discord because each species and individual retains only a certain impetus from the universal vital impulse and tends to use this energy in its own self interest. Harmony is achieved when one identifies himself with the impulse which is the universal duration.

Life is a tendency to act on inert matter. The direction of this action is not predetermined, hence the unforeseeable variety of forms which life, in evolving, sows along its path. Before the evolution of life, the doors of the future remain wide open. Creation goes on forever. Although the force which is evolving throughout the world is a limited one, it is always seeking to transcend itself and always remains inadequate to the work it would fain produce. Even in its most perfect form, says Bergson, it is at the mercy of the materiality which it has had to assume.³ Intelligence has been developed to transform matter into an instrument of action.

If life were aimed only at love and beauty, its development would have stopped with the birds, says Don Juan. Instead,

Life was driving at brains -- at its darling object: an organ by which it can attain not only self consciousness but self understanding.

.

But to Life, the force behind the Man, intellect is a necessity, because without it he blunders into death. Just as Life after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and what was coming to help or threaten it and thus avoid a thousand dangers that formerly slew it, so it is evolving today a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up short sighted personal aims as at present. (379)

When we put back our being into our will and our will itself into the impulsion it prolongs, we feel that reality is a perpetual growth, a creation pursued without end. We are not the vital current itself, we are the current already loaded with matter, with congealed parts of its own substance which it carries along its course. Life evolved on our planet is attached to matter and is subject to the laws that govern inert matter, but it is doing its utmost to set itself free from those laws and to achieve the freedom of pure intelligence at last.

2. The Sex Instinct

The Life Force is the driving power in man which presses him forward to a continuous development. Since its greatest concern is the improvement of the race, its most powerful manifestation is in the sex instinct. In On the Rocks Aloysia tries to reason with herself and explain the nature of her passion, "Evolution is telling me to marry this youth . . . the evolutionary appetite, the being that wants to develop the race." (1216) Junius in Buoyant Billions (1947), succumbs with a similar excuse, "The Life Force has got me. I can make no conditions." Old Bill agrees, "If you are her man she will have you, considerations or no considerations."⁴ Junius, attempting to explain his way out of his romantic entanglement, laments, "Oh why am I so infatuated with you? I know so many apparently superior women."⁵ She, reasoning, calls her lover a vagabond, but admits that when she thinks of him, everything is transformed and she is magically happy. In Shaw the grand passion of romantic love is no adventure of the soul with courtly medieval trappings, but a means of bringing together suitable parents whose offspring will improve the quality of the race. Shaw admits that the feelings evoked by the Life Force are of dazzling intensity and cannot be explained away.

Junius tries, however:

I saw Miss Buoyant one night at the opera. She attracted me so strongly that I did not hear one note of the music. I found out who she was but not what she is. I know nothing of her tastes, her intelligence, her manners, her temper: in short of anything that would make it possible for me to live with her; yet I feel that I must possess her. For this I have no excuse. Nature has struck this blow at me: I can neither explain it or resist it We have not even a name for this mystery. (1382)

Shaw implies that the sex instinct is greater than the power of reason: it is irresistible. He explains its nature in Don Juan's speech in Man and Superman:

In the sex relation the universal creative energy of which the parties are both the helpless agents, overrides and sweeps away all personal considerations, and dispenses with all personal relations. The pair may be utter strangers to one another, speaking different languages, differing in race and color, in age and disposition with no bond between them but a possibility of the fecundity for the sake of which the Life Force throws them into one another's arms at the exchange of a glance. (384)

Second Born, in Buoyant Billions stresses the illusory nature of the sex instinct; it is not a fixed quantity, "what the mathematicians call a constant:"

It varies from zero . . . to madness Reason and experience, which hold it in check, are also variable.

Nothing in the world ever stays put for ten seconds. We can know it only relatively at any moment. Yet most people can think only absolutely. (1381)

Because of its nature sexual attraction cannot be considered as an acceptable basis for a permanent union. Old Bill in Buoyant Billions separates marriages from love affairs. Marriages based on romantic attachment too often break down

"because Providence wants sound children and does not care a snap of its fingers whether its parents are happy or not. It makes them mad about one another until the children are born and then drops them like hot potatoes."⁶ He concludes that money is a sound basis for a good marriage: at least it guarantees comfort and culture, whereas Love guarantees nothing, except good children, we presume.

The Widower agrees with Bill:

My first marriage which was quite biological, was a failure. What people called our love turned into something very like hatred. But biological tastes are not low tastes. Our two children were great successes: beautiful children with good characters. But nobody could live in the same house with their mother. (1380)

Shrews and bullies, though impossible to live with, can still produce excellent bastards. Shaw nowhere ventures a solution to the social problem posed by the offspring of these inspired unions. He is convinced that the sex instinct is the means by which the Life Force betters the race, and we must accept this fact. In a nation well bred biologically there should be concubines as well as wives and husbands. Indirectly he implies that the action of the Life Force supersedes social barriers and that the children should not be deprived of proper recognition.

3. The Artist

Paralleling Lamarck's thesis that the living organism modifies its body according to its needs, Shaw equates the Life Force with a Providence, which, when not defeated by the imperfection of its mortal instruments, always takes care that the necessary functionaries are born specialized for their jobs. These are the geniuses or supermen. Shaw cites himself as a case in point, working as an instrument of the Life Force, writing on what is called inspiration. In the preface to Buoyant Billions, he confesses;

When I take my pen or sit down at my typewriter, I am as much a medium as Browning's Mr. Sludge When I write a play I do not foresee or intend a page of it from one end to the other: the play writes itself. (4)

Shaw considers himself a literary genius who was born because the times required his particular gift. In the preface to Far Fetched Fables (1948), he writes, "As events, as they actually occur mean no more than a passing crowd to a policeman, they must be arranged in some comprehensible order as stories. Without these there can be no history, no morality, no social conscience. Thus the historian, the poet, the mathematician, and the philosophers are functionaries without whom civilization would not be possible." He concludes, "I was born a storyteller because one was needed I am a social necessity."⁷ The playwright, the artist, the genius is merely doing the work of the Life Force.

The artist in the grip of the Life Force finds himself in the throes of an irresistible power. In Man and Superman, Tanner argues that Octavius is in a position to resist Ann's romantic advances:

But you, Tavy, are an artist: that is you have a purpose as absorbing and unscrupulous as a woman's purpose
 The true artist will let his wife starve, his children go barefoot, his mother drudge for a living at seventy, sooner than work at anything but his art. He [the artist] gets into intimate relations with them [women]
 knowing that they have the power to rouse his deepest creative energies, to rescue him from his cold reason, to make him see visions and dream dreams, to inspire him as he calls it . . . the artist's work is to shew us ourselves as we really are. Our minds are nothing but this knowledge of ourselves; and he who adds a jot to such knowledge creates new mind as surely as any woman creates new man. (341)

The artist controlled by a great mystic power has a clearer vision of the truth; we must try to understand him and heed his message. In Good King Charles's Golden Days (1939), Kneller says:

Your majesty: the world must learn from its artists because God made the world as an artist

Man: artists do not prove things They KNOW them.

[To the artist all else is trifling] beside our great labor of creation and interpretation.

.
 But the hand that can draw the images of God and reveal the soul in them, and is inspired to do this and nothing else even if he starves and is cast off by his father and all his family, for it: is not his hand the hand used by God, who, being a spirit without body, parts or passions, has no hands? (1358-9)

By identifying his will with that of the Life Force, the

artist can achieve an absolute knowledge of reality. All gifted people are orifices through which the Life Force wells up, creating an enormous drive or energy, a sense of power which goes outward into action. The artist cannot prove or explain things through the medium of the intellect; he knows them through his intuition. Thus the artist is in possession of real knowledge which we must learn from him by means of his particular medium.

The symbol is the means of bridging unequal levels of understanding. For the common man symbols are the evidences of things unseen; they bear within themselves characteristics both of the specific and its universal essence. Fox, attacking the Churches, in In Good King Charles's Golden Days, says that all churches stand between man and His Maker and take on themselves divine powers when they lack divine attributes. Charles defends them as being indispensable conveniences for most of us since there are great mysteries which must be symbolized, because, although we feel them we do not know them.⁸ Only the artist has this direct experience.

The genius working out his destiny is a truly happy being. Shaw claims that the artist in the grip of the Life Force is held in the throes of creativity, subject to a strong emotional stimulation:

This satisfaction, this pleasure, this appetite is as yet far from being as intense as the sexual orgasm or the ecstasy of a saint, though future cortical evolution may leave them far behind. Yet there are moments of inexplicable happiness They have an exalted

chronic happiness, as of earth become heaven proving that such states are possible for us even as we now are.⁹

This tremendous satisfaction is the artist's reward for his creative effort.

As Tanner has said, the artist's purpose is to add to the mind new knowledge of itself, thereby creating new mind. He knows the truth, but in the words of Joan, "I cannot tell you the whole truth: God does not allow the whole truth to be told. You do not understand it when I tell it."¹⁰ The truth revealed is often too much for mortal man to bear, and the genius is burned or crucified, because, as Cauchon says, mortal eyes cannot distinguish the saint from the heretic and the heretic is better dead.¹¹

4. The Politician

The natural leader, the politician, is also an agent of the Life Force, a manifestation of God's will. Bombardone, presumably based on Mussolini, presents this point of view in Geneva: (1938)

Authority is a sort of genius: either you have it or you have not. Either you are obeyed or torn to pieces. But in some souls and on some points there is an authority higher than any other. Of such is the Roman soul. (1324)

God uses us to do his work; if we neglect it, the world falls into the chaos called liberty and democracy in which nothing is done but talk while the people perish, he says. Into this society is born the great leader who will continue the forward

development of the race. Bombardone elaborates:

Well, what you call God's work, His hardest work, His political work, cannot be done by everybody: they have neither the time nor the brains nor the divine call for it. God has sent to certain persons this call. They are not chosen by the people: they must choose themselves: this is part of their inspiration. When they have dared to do this, what happens? Out of the Liberal democratic chaos comes form, purpose, order and rapid execution. (1326)

Battler (Hitler) likewise maintains that his power is mystical. Shaw argues that the right man for the job will appear when he is needed; further, he knows that he is the right man because of the great power of the Life Force within him which gives him the authority (disbelievers will call it conceit), without which he cannot command his followers. Bombardone described his presence at the Geneva meeting in these terms, "I am here because it is my will to be here. My will is part of the world's will."¹²

This affirmation identifies the superman. He acts in conformity with his will which he knows to be the will of the world, with that maxim which he can will to be a universal law of action. He regards himself as prescribing universal laws by reference to which he himself and all his actions are to be judged. This autonomy of will provides him with the supreme principle of morality: he is answerable to no one but himself. There is nothing external to his will which compels him to act in conformity with it. Further, the man of good will acts so that he uses humanity always as an end, never as a means. The superman must

therefore always act in the best interests of the development of the race. Shaw's staunch belief in the good will of dictators suffered a decline after the events of the second world war.

He was convinced that we must look to the superman for guidance in spite of the fact that he might be equipped with some negative attributes as well as extraordinary talents. The Life Force has endowed him with a clear vision of his purpose and a power to dominate others which he must develop to the utmost. Our business is to learn to appraise his talents and curb those which tend to be harmful to us. Shaw's heroes are uncommon or gifted people and those in the late plays are no exception. Here they are men, and sometimes women, who are in big business or in government in positions of authority.

In The Millionairess (1936), Epifania reveals a tremendous admiration for her father, "a genius," she says, "in public a moneymaker, in private an instructor of others in their business. My father was a great man: everyday of his life he did things that nobody else ever dreamt of doing."¹³ Newton, in In Good King Charles's Golden Days emphasizes this superior vision in describing the philosopher who sees a hundred miracles a day where the ignorant and thoughtless see nothing but the daily round, the common task.¹⁴

Shaw has faint praise for democracy, but one point in its favor is that it is a most useful breeding ground for

leaders; it has freed man from the domination of priest and king, landlord and capitalist, to bring him under the law of personal gravitation. This is the law of nature. In short, democratic government permits the development of the superman. In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw puts a question which was of primary concern to him: How are the intellectual giants to bring the enormous force of their brains, their prestige, their authority to bear on the destinies of nations? The superman inevitably becomes the lawgiver who creates a new mentality and a new moral code. After he has done this he is no longer indispensable and the government reverts to a routine which can be managed by dunderheads who keep on doing what was done the last time.¹⁵

As late as 1945, in the preface to Geneva, Shaw continues to defend dictators in general, but he does admit that Hitler and Mussolini are political failures. They are not personal failures: they are able despots who have made good by doing things better and more expeditiously than parliaments. They have kept their heads and known their limitations when ordinary mortals have gone crazy. Parliaments are too slow; dictators are provided by the Life Force when drastic changes are needed. They are personally fitted for the exercise of authority and undertake a heavy and responsible job which strains their mental capacity and industry to the utmost. Hitler failed because he did not

make his initial conquests welcome and permanent by improving the condition of the inhabitants. On the contrary he made his name execrated wherever he went, and both men died ignominiously.¹⁶

A major problem of the leader in power is getting the common man to recognize his superiority and to accept his unconventional new ideas. Mrs. Third Born in Buoyant Billions, says of her genius father-in-law, "His dearest wish was to be a teacher and a preacher. But as he had original ideas no one would employ him as a preacher, nor listen to him as a teacher. He always tried to teach his children to speak their minds and never to mistake saying the proper thing for the truth."¹⁷ Shaw's sympathy is not all with the genius, however. The matron in the Third Fable of Farfetched Fables expresses the misgiving of many of us, when we are confronted by one of the superior individuals:

I prefer nincompoops. I can always depend on them to do what was done the last time; but I never know what a genius will be up to next, except that it will be something upsetting. (1395)

It would appear that the fool is more tolerable than the wise man, says Shaw. Must the wise man take on the guise of the fool in order to teach men? Shaw himself made doubly sure by writing both plays and prefaces.

The freaks of nature which we call Great Men indicate not human attainment but human possibility and hope, although they are often "steeped in vulgar superstitions and

prejudices," writes Shaw at the end of his preface to Geneva. They prove that though we are in the mass only Child Yahoos, it is possible for creatures built exactly like us, bred from our unions and developed from our seeds, to reach the heights of these towering heads. Recalling briefly the theme of longevity, which he had developed so intensively in Back to Methuselah (1921), Shaw argues that if we master the art of living instead of digging our graves, we may conceivably reach a point at which the sole cause of death will be the fatal accident which is statistically inevitable if we live long enough. This may not be as distant a possibility as we imagine. The pace of evolutionary development is not constant (Shaw reminds us that the baby in the womb recapitulates years of evolution), and it is doubtful if the old axiom that nature never jumps is true. New faculties, however they may be dreamt of or desired, come at last suddenly and miraculously. The development of homo sapiens into a competent political animal may occur in the same way.¹⁸

Shaw's final advice to the genius is to live fully. In the preface to The Millionairess he urges that whatever the setbacks or the results, the dominating people must fulfill themselves:

I say cheerfully to the dominators "By all means dominate: it is up to us to so order our institutions that you shall not oppress us, nor bequeath any of your precedence to your commonplace children." When ambition and greed and brainless energy have been disabled, the way will be clear for inspiration and aspiration to save us from the fatheaded stagnation of the accursed Victorian snobbery which is bringing us to the verge of ruin. (130)

5. Exceptional Women

In Man and Superman, Shaw most clearly defines the difference in function accorded to men and women by the Life Force. Sexually, Woman is Nature's contrivance for perpetrating its highest achievement. Sexually, Man is Woman's contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest in the most economical way. As a result man uses only a fraction of the immense energy with which he is endowed; the rest has gone to his brain and his muscle. He has become too strong, too imaginative and mentally vigorous to be content with mere self-reproduction. The Woman, on the other hand, is concerned with getting a husband. This is her great purpose

. . . and that purpose is neither her happiness nor yours but Nature's. Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation. She sacrifices herself to it

.
Because they have a purpose which is not their own purpose, but that of the whole universe, a man is nothing to them but an instrument of that purpose. (340)

Contrary to the conventional view that the man pursues his mate, Shaw proposes that women are ruthless and unscrupulous in their pursuit of men. The ordinary man, the mere breadwinner, is easily subdued, but the artist, who is just as ruthlessly pursuing his own purpose puts up a deadly and remorseless struggle against the slavery which the Woman imposes.

Shaw's women in the late plays continue to be rebellious of convention, striving to gain recognition as

individuals; they acknowledge their natural purpose, but also carry their housekeeping duties over into society, the realm of government and big business. The modern woman in the respectable middle class home is still frustrated. In Too True To Be Good (1932), the Burglar exclaims:

The well-brought up maiden revolts against her respectable life. The aspiring soul escapes from home, sweet home, which . . . is the girl's prison and the woman's workhouse. (1140)

She rebels against the over protection of the conventional home and seeks the freedom to learn the truth about the real world.

The independent, self-sufficient New Woman makes herself at home in any geography. In the play Buoyant Billions, Clemmy lives in the tropics in Panama. She appears to be physically strong, and capable of dealing successfully with the basic essentials of existence. The Son comments on her bluntness, "The coarse realism with which women face physical facts shocks the delicacy of my sex."¹⁹ She has no use for men who are dreamers or drones; they need killers. "Where are your scalps?" she cries. Clemmy is rude, unfeeling, uncharitable, unsentimental, determined to renounce the woman as a "holy woman", seeming, however, to be singularly lacking in conscience. In contrast with her, He reveals opposite characteristics, exhibiting, in a kind of reversal of sex, traits commonly described as womanly. He hates hunting, killing, and fishing, the conventional attributes of the "masculine" male, and is timid and cowardly, showing

a remarkable lack of pride and aggressiveness.

The women are at least the equal of men in physical strength, energy, tenacity, and determination, ironically taking advantage of the male's adherence to a chivalric code of manners to get their own ways. Epifania, in The Millionairess, represents the emancipated woman in her most extreme form. Like Clemmy in Buoyant Billions, she idolizes and strives to imitate her genius millionaire father. Like him, she has a strong imagination, her intellectual world is peopled by heroes and saints, and she lives constantly at the "deep end". Like many other exceptional people she is impossible to live with. Patricia, in her quiet way analyzes them:

The people that no one can live with may be very good-looking and vital and splendid and temperamental and romantic and all that; and they can make a man or woman happy for half an hour when they are pleased with themselves and disposed to be agreeable; but if you try to live with them they just eat up your whole life running after them or quarrelling or attending to them one way or another: you cant call your soul your own. (1259)

The attraction these people assert is a very powerful one. Sagamore says of Epifania, "It's that her will paralyzes mine. It's a sort of genius some people have." He might have added that her arguments, based upon real knowledge, played a large part in subduing her opponents. Her determination, too, is formidable. "When I want anything," she says, I lose my head so completely about it, that I always get it I want only what I can get."²⁰

The Egyptian doctor complains about Epifania's lack of femininity. He says, "You are apparently sexless You talk to me as if you were a man. There is no mystery, no separateness, no sacredness about men to you." (1269)

Epifania considers all men to be fools and herself to be their superior in all respects. She invades even the last outpost of masculine superiority, physical strength, and is not above attacking her lovers bodily when they disagree with her; unfortunately for her, Alastair, her boxing champion first husband, hits her back.

Epifania's genius lies in her business ability; she takes over the sweatshop and the hotel and makes them into money-making concerns. Wielding the power of money to achieve her ends, she rides rough-shod over human attachments and feelings. She gets rid of the old people, tells the scullery maids the truth about themselves, and retires the mother and father from satisfying jobs to a dreary inactivity. Her efficiency sweeps all resistance before it like a tornado.

The doctor points out her lack of sensitivity:

But what of the old people whose natural home this place had become? the old man with his paralytic stroke? the old woman gone mad? the cast out creatures in the work-house? was this not preying on the poverty of the poor? (1282)

Epifania is totally unconcerned about the problems of human relationships. As a highly gifted individual she sees from the historical perspective the large social pattern of events.

The Devil in Man and Superman offers an explanation of the genius's lack of understanding of private personal problems. He says:

Beware of the pursuit of the Superhuman: it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the Human. To a man, horses, and dogs and cats are mere species, outside the moral world. Well, to the Superman, men and women are a mere species too, also outside the moral world. (388)

The doctor does not approve of Epifania's disregard for the personal havoc she has brought about. He points out that the wrath of Allah shall overtake those who leave the world no better than they found it.²¹ Shaw presents two points of view, that of long-range betterment as opposed to short-term comfort. The superman takes the former position.

Orinthia, in The Apple Cart (1929), is a more feminine counterpart of Epifania, equalling her however, in bad temper, conceit, and energy; instead of reforming the world she devotes her talents to the seduction of men. Her second husband had complained to her, "No man could call his soul his own in the same house with you."²² She makes continual demands on others. With an element of truth, Orinthia ironically states the reason for the essential incompatibility of exceptional people. She says, "But because I was higher than they were, and greater, they could not stand the strain of living up to me."²³ Like Epifania, she treads the "plains of heaven," soaring in imagination above the everyday business of living among the heterogeneous members of society. She has a tremendous awareness of the importance of her self, a feeling quite distinct from the "vulgar conceit" we all feel

when we have accomplished something creditable. She says:

Give me a goddess's work to do; and I will do it. I will even stoop to a queen's work if you will share the throne with me. But do not pretend that people become great by doing great things. They do great things because they are great, if the great thing comes along. But they are great just the same when the great things do not come along. (1031)

Although exceptional women are powerful enough to exert a tremendous influence in business and politics (Epifania predicts an enormous success for herself as an administrator in the Russian scheme as well as in the capitalist one), they are still concerned with their prime purpose in life as instruments of the Life Force. Needing a woman capable of bearing first rate children, it may endow her with enchanting sexual attraction, yet leave her destitute of the qualities which make married life with her bearable. It is a sense of this destiny that makes women retain their hold on life and hope and trust in the future when men despair and become cynics and pessimists because all their plans fail. At the end of The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles (1934), Prola makes this affirmation:

For me every day must have its miracle, and no child be born like any child that ever was born before. And to witness this miracle of the children I will abide the uttermost evil and carry through it the seed of the uttermost good. (1247)

Prola is perhaps the most attractive of Shaw's later heroines. She has been a wife and mother; she has had a successful marriage relationship, and has retained her own individuality and developed her ability to the utmost. She

says to Pra:

-- but Ive never allowed you or any other man to cut me off my own stem and make me a parasite on his. That sort of love and sacrifice is not the consummation of a capable woman's existence: it is the temptation she must resist at all costs. (1246)

At the end of the play, Prola is elected to be the wise philosopher queen. She has been the real ruler for some time as it is she who has the power to decide, to unite, to understand. On her the family wish to place the burdens of thought, knowledge, righteousness, justice, and mercy. To her these are no burdens at all, "They are the air I breathe." Lightly sketched, she is presented as the wise earth mother, whose role is to create life, not to destroy it, essentially a good woman.

Searching for the enduring realities of life, many of the women discover that although love does not last, work does. Like Clemmy in The Millionairess and Darkie in Buoyant Billions, the Patient in Too True To Be Good decides to renounce men and form a sisterhood which will do good and useful things:

I have the instincts of a good housekeeper: I want to clean up this filthy world and keep it clean. There must be other women who want it too. Florence Nightingale had the same instinct when she went to clean up the Crimean war. She wanted a sisterhood; but there wasn't one. (1161)

Shaw persistently reminds us that romantic passion is a fleeting thing and that man's work and the everyday business of life must go on in spite of it.

In the final speech of the same play, Aubrey declaims upon man's purpose in life, to search continually for enlightenment, knowledge, and revelation. In the epilogue, Shaw slyly points out that the Pentecostal Flame is always alight at the service of those who are strong enough to bear its terrible intensity, and that the world cannot be saved by talk alone. We must look to the doers. Shaw writes:

He [The author] has given the rascal the last word; but his own favorite is the woman of action, who begins by knocking the wind out of the rascal and ends with the cheerful conviction that the lost dogs always find their way home. So they will, perhaps, if the women go out and look for them. (1168)

6. Aspects of the Life Force

Shaw as a Creative Evolutionist postulates a great Life Force or Evolutionary Appetite seeking power over circumstance and development by the method of trial and error. It makes mistake after mistake, with the best intentions, but in the end wins in its final irresistible way. The Life Force coaxes, coerces, and motivates man towards continuous progress, but the many aspects of its nature are not clear to us. Fox, in In Good King Charles's Golden Days, considering how God reveals himself, is perturbed by the duality of His nature:

I am troubled. I cannot conceive that God should contradict himself. How must the revelation of today be received if it be contrary to the revelation of yesterday? (1338)

Can we imagine a God who is making mistakes, who is not some

omnipotent power, but an omnipresent working force in the universe struggling to realize himself?

Shaw presents another view of the development of the Life Force in Buoyant Billions. The Native makes a seemingly naive yet practical assessment of this strange phenomenon:

My grandfather saw the evils of this world, and thought they shewed the terrible greatness of Hoochlipoochli. My father saw them also, but could not reconcile the existence of evil with divine justice and benevolence. He believed not only in Hoochlipoochli but also in Poochlihoochli the god of hell I believe as they did that justice and benevolence are mighty powers in the world but that they have no effective existence save in ourselves, and that except to the extent to which you and I and our like are just and benevolent, there is no justice and no benevolence. (1375)

This does not imply that there is no God, says the Native:

Not at all His kingdom is within us; but it is for us to administer it. Something within me makes me hunger and thirst for righteousness. That something must be Hoochlipoochli. (1375)

The Native gives an irreverent summary of the revelation of God to man, or perhaps the history of man's comprehension of God. The grandfather sees in God the Old Testament vision of the terrible Destroyer, the father imagines the medieval Christian God divided against himself in Satan, the son searches for God within himself, developing as he himself develops through the medium of the Life Force.

Since it is the purpose of the Life Force to press the race towards a continuous development, it is bound to effect change. Unfortunately it is the nature of the material of which we are made to resist change: our matter wills that we remain the same. In Buoyant Billions, Father and Son

argue about slow parliamentary reform as opposed to the violent overthrow of a revolution. The father belittles the son's chosen career as World Betterer; he insists that people simply will not change their ways. The son disagrees:

Besides, things will not stay as they are. However hard we try to stick in our old grooves, evolution goes on in spite of us. The more we strive to stay as we are, the more we find that we are no longer where we were.
(1369)

Resistance to change is doomed to failure because the Life Force is irresistible. In spite of some pessimistic moments Shaw presents the view that man progresses by degrees and eventually becomes a superior type of being. As the world evolves, the revolutionary ideas become old fashioned and new ground is broken. Speaking from the vantage point of some far distant future development, Youth I, in the Sixth Fable of Farfetched Fables, mourns because he has been forced to change his ideas:

Well, I was brought up to consider that we are the vanguard of civilization, the last step in creative evolution. But according to the theory we are only a survival of the sort of mankind that existed in the twentieth century, no better than black beetles compared to the supermen who evolved into the disembodied.
(1400)

Shaw describes a mystical spiritual world consisting of a superior race who have developed prodigiously in the direction of intelligence. The teacher tells what happened:

People actually did get rid of their bodies. They got rid of their tails, of their fur, of their teeth. They acquired thumbs and enlarged their brains.

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The theory is that the Disembodied Races still exist as Thought Vortexes, and are penetrating our thick skulls in their continual pursuit of knowledge and power, since they need our hands and brains as tools in that pursuit. (1401)

The Fourth Maiden does not admit that rule by thought is necessarily good, "Some of our thoughts are damnably mischievous. We slaughter one another and destroy the cities. What puts that into our head? Not pursuit of knowledge and power." The teacher's reply is as close as Shaw gets to an explanation of the nature of evil:

Yes; for the pursuit of knowledge and power involves the slaughter and destruction of everything that opposes it. The disembodied must inspire the soldier and the hunter as well as the pacifist and the philanthropist. (1401)

When asked why anyone should oppose the thoughts which come from well meaning vortexes, the teacher counters that even they, as manifestations of Creative Evolution, have to do their work by trial and error. They, as we do, must learn by their mistakes as well as by their successes.²⁴

The total energy of the Life Force has nothing in it of the ready made. It is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation so conceived is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely. It is the flow of time, the very flux of the real that we should be trying to follow. By entering into this reality, this duration, this becoming, we complete the intellect and its knowledge of matter, by developing another faculty, intuition. True duration means

creation, and if that which is being unmade endures it can be only because it is inseparably bound to what is making itself. Thus will appear the necessity of a continual growth of the universe. To the Ancients, time was a degradation, a change, a diminution of a form given from all eternity. The modern view holds that time is a progressive growth of the absolute, and in the evolution of things a continual invention of forms new, flowing out of previous forms. A radical recasting of the whole is always going on.²⁵

Shaw uses the idea of the Life Force as a tool in his plays. The central tension revolves around the characters who strongly project the power resulting from a high endowment of the energy of the Life Force against the immobility of lesser perceptive individuals, social institutions which resist reform, and outmoded conventions. The strongest manifestation of this energy is found in the sex instinct which presents social problems when it oversteps class barriers. The sex instinct is not important merely as a means of continuing the race, but as a method by which the Life Force chooses the parents who will produce the best possible children, not the happiest marriage partners. The genius is endowed with a superabundance of this same creative energy, which is directed towards gaining knowledge and thereby creating new mind. The tendency of the genius is to develop in the direction of intelligence, in the conquest of the body, that is matter, and to achieve at last

a separate existence in the form of abstract thought. Exceptional women, while still primarily concerned with childbearing, develop as reformers and organizers. Unfortunately, with the limitless choice at its disposal, the Life Force produces useless forms which are destroyed; these are the mistakes which result from the trial and error method of development. These evils must, in part, be attributed to the tension arising from matter resisting change, but they are only incidental in the great struggle of the Life Force to improve the race and to realize power through knowledge.

II

SOCIETY AS GOVERNMENT

1. Introduction

It has been sometimes said that the history of modern democracy has paralleled that of the rise of the middle class. Medieval society was structured like a pyramid with the "divinely" inspired king at the top; below him was a rigidly defined class scale on which every individual had his place. With the coming of industrialization, however, a growing mercantile class sounded a new and rude voice in the business of government. It demanded an end to the continual civil war, called for freedom and a voice in the government, and soon requested price fixing and control of trade. By the nineteenth century, liberal democracy and laissez-faire economy were based on the idea that the universe was operated in accordance with natural laws, the most significant of which was that the individual, by pursuing his own interests, best served those of the community. Shaw criticizes the parallel development of democracy and capitalism in his preface to The Truth About Soviet Russia by Sidney and Beatrice Webb:

Capitalism was and is a paper Utopia By pure logic, without a moment's reference to the facts, it demonstrated that you had only to enforce private contracts and let everybody buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest to produce automatically a condition in which there would be no unemployment, and

every honest and industrious person would enjoy a sufficient wage to maintain himself and his wife and reproduce his kind, whilst an enriched superior class would have leisure and means to preserve and develop the nation's culture and civilization and, by receiving more of the national income than they could possibly consume, save all the capital, needed to make prosperity increase by leaps and bounds.

It was felt that the law of supply and demand, and freedom of competition would regulate the economy for the good of everyone. Writers such as Bentham, Mill, Paine, and Jefferson had contributed to the view that the world, made literate by widespread education, would enthusiastically support this liberal democracy. By the end of the century, however, it became apparent that competition was being stifled by the growth of monopolies. Earlier there had been a plea for a minimum of government interference; now there was a clamor for the stiffening of controls. The recurring economic crises increased government intervention in business, and there were demands for social and economic guarantees which were to be incorporated into the new constitutions:

Shaw persistently attacks capitalist democracy. He claims that in actual fact democratic government of the people, by the people, "professed ideologically nowadays by all governments and oppositions has never for a moment existed." Further we are already involved in socialism without calling it by that name. History has proved that the future of democracy is indeed precarious. Norman Stamps, in his penetrating study, Why Democracies Fail,

writes:

If events in the nineteenth century revealed a trend towards a wider acceptance of representative institutions, it would appear that this trend has today been reversed. It was, of course, always true that democracy was loudly proclaimed in many places where it was not applied in practice; yet the contrast between the prestige, admiration, and respect for representative institutions and the criticism and ridicule to which they are subjected today is a striking one. Moreover, many nations which had previously adopted a parliamentary regime have since rejected it.²

After the First World War democratic governments toppled in rapid succession, beginning with Russia in 1917, and followed by all the other major European powers except France and the Scandinavian countries by 1936.

Shaw implies in his late plays that democracy as a workable form of government is on its way out. He claims that the electoral system is a fraud, the parliamentary system makes efficient government impossible, and that the successful politician is the candidate who most glibly promises the people what they desire whether dictated by the mind or passions or both. He attacks adult suffrage, the motto of democracy; Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, capitalism and the rule of the rich. He also presents arguments for three alternatives to democracy: dictatorship, monarchy, and socialism.

2. Government by the People

Perhaps the most popular definition of democracy is Lincoln's, a government of the people, for the people, by the people. Shaw agrees with the first two parts of the definition, but maintains that government BY the people is dangerous nonsense. First of all, the people don't want to be governed. In a talk given in the United States in 1933, Shaw says:

The ordinary man is an anarchist. He wants to do as he likes. He may want his neighbor to be governed, but he himself doesn't want to be governed. He is mortally afraid of government officials, and policemen He shrinks from giving anybody any official powers whatsoever.³

Elsewhere⁴ he points out that attempts at rule by the people have finally resulted in tyranny because anarchy, being unbearable, produces overwhelming majorities in favor of regressions called "Restorations or Napoleonic Emperors and South American dictator-presidents."

Democracy, then, cannot be government by the people: it can only be government by the consent of the governed. Unfortunately, when democratic statesmen propose to govern us by our own consent they find that we don't want to be governed at all, and that we regard rates and taxes and rents and death duties as intolerable burdens.⁵

Democracy, to Shaw, emphatically does not mean government BY everybody: it means in the interest of everybody.

Since the electorate is so unwilling to be governed, the leaders have difficulty in instituting reforms. It seems better that a government do foolish things with popular support

than wise ones without it. Measures may not be adopted which will permanently alienate a class or a group large enough to overthrow the government. What the people ought to want is immaterial; democratic government must give them what they do want. In On the Rocks, Sir Arthur Chavender states what this is:

They want something done that will give them decent employment. They want to eat and drink the wheat and coffee that the profiteers are burning because they cant sell it at a profit. They want to hang people who burn good food when people are going hungry. (1208)

In the midst of the depression Shaw makes a plea for government control of the production of food. Besides looking after their physical needs, the people paradoxically want the government to do their thinking for them:

They cant set matters right themselves; so they want rulers who will discipline them and make them do it instead of making them do the other thing. They are ready to go mad with enthusiasm for any man strong enough to make them do anything, even if it is only Jew baiting, provided it's something tyrannical, something coercive, something that we all pretend no Englishman would submit to, though weve known ever since we gave them the vote that theyd submit to anything. (1208)

The people are sick of democracy because they know that they don't and can't govern, and really know nothing about government. Shaw presents here two conflicting views, one that the people refuse to be governed and the other that they demand tyranny. He proposes socialism as the answer to the problem.

3. Adult Suffrage and Dictatorship

But Old Hipney can tell you something about Democracy at first hand. Democracy was a great thing when I was young and we had no votes. We talked about public opinion and what the British people would stand and what they wouldnt stand. And it had weight, I tell you, sir: it held Governments in check: it frightened the stoutest of the tyrants and the bosses and the police: it brought a real reverence into the voices of great orators like Bright and Gladstone. But that was when it was a dream and a vision, a hope and a faith and a promise. It lasted until they dragged it down to earth, as you might say, and made it a reality by giving everybody votes. The moment they gave the working men votes they found theyd stand anything. (1213)

This lament for the demise of democracy is spoken by Hipney in On the Rocks which, as a play, reveals Shaw's own pessimism with regard to the future of representative government. Votes for all was the ideal; it would solve the problems of government. Instead, Hipney continues, "It delivered us into the hands of our spoilers and oppressors, bound hand and foot by our own folly and ignorance."⁶

Universal suffrage is based on the belief that man is a rational animal, capable of intelligent choice, and that, having heard the arguments he will make a wise decision. The voter is considered to have sound judgment, the ability to get facts, and the power to argue logically with them; he has the capacity to reflect and judge, and a devotion to the common interest. Shaw claims that the assumption that every adult is capable of choosing his rulers is wrong; democracy is mobocracy. In Buoyant Billions, the Son argues with his father for revolution rather than constitutional change:

He says:

Why appeal to the mob when ninety-five percent of them do not understand politics and can do nothing but mischief without leaders? And what sort of leaders do they vote for? For Titus Oates and Lord George Gordons with their Popish Plots, for Hitlers who call on them to exterminate Jews, for Mussolinis who rally them on to nationalistic dreams of glory and empire in which all foreigners are enemies to be subjugated. (1369)

It is curious that the Son, and elsewhere Shaw, indicates that only about five percent of the population are capable of ruling, or understanding politics; the remaining majority is classed in a lump as political idiots. The effect, if illogical, is striking by the exaggeration.

The advent of adult suffrage, which was to have ushered in true democracy, brought only disillusionment. Hipney points out that parliament has become a laughing-stock. Parliamentary leaders say one thing Monday, the opposite on Wednesday, and nobody notices the differences. It wasn't that the "poor silly sheep" did it on purpose: they didn't notice, they couldn't remember, they couldn't understand, they were taken in by any nonsense they heard at the meetings or read in the paper.⁷ He implies that the mass of people are really incapable of understanding government.

Adult suffrage presupposes that the decision go to the majority. This is false, says Shaw. The snag is that the majority is against any change, and since it takes at least thirty years to convert it, while only ten percent of

the population has sufficient mental capacity to foresee its necessity or desirability, a time lag is created during which the majority is always out of date. It would be more sensible to leave the decision to a minority, if a qualified one could be selected or impanelled. Democratic government needs a cabinet of thinkers (Politbureau) as well as a cabinet of administrators (Commissars). Adult suffrage can never supply this, especially in England where intellect is hated or dreaded, not wholly without reason; unless it is disciplined and politically educated, it is dangerous.⁸

In On the Rocks, Blee speaks out in favor of the majority vote. He says, "What I want done is the will of the people. I am for the referendum. I am for the initiative. When a majority of the people are in favor of a measure then I am for that measure." (1207) Bemrose's opinion of the electorate is not glowing, "The majority is never in favor of any measure. They dont know what a measure is. What they want is their orders, and as much comfort as they are accustomed to." (1207) Ideally, the majority vote is accepted only after a discussion during which the minority has had an opportunity to criticize the original motion. Often these suggestions modify the first proposal; then the majority obtained is no longer a merely mathematical one, but has assumed a universal character which does justice to the whole community. Otherwise the notion that wisdom resides in a

popular majority is nonsense.⁹

Hipney points out that adult suffrage simply proved the inability of the masses in managing their own affairs. They are incapable of choosing or criticising the government. Out of this chaos arises the need for a dictator. Hipney elaborates:

. . . now I'm for any Napoleon or Mussolini or Lenin or Chavender that has the stuff in him to take both the people and the spoilers and the oppressors by the scruffs of their silly necks and just sling them into the way they should go with as many kicks as may be needful to make a thorough job of it. (1213)

The dictator would take upon himself the responsibility that seems to be lacking in a democracy:

Better one dictator standing up responsible before the world for the good and evil he does than a dirty little dictator in every street responsible to nobody Me and my like has been dictated to all our lives by swine that have nothing but a snout for money (1213)

In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw continues in a similar vein. Modern liberal democracy provides unlimited opportunity for tyranny; its failure results in the rise of dictatorships. He says, "Neither Mussolini nor Hitler could have achieved their present personal sympathy in the middle of the nineteenth century because the prevailing mentality of that deluded time was still hopefully parliamentary."¹⁰ It was part of the democratic dream that parliament be an instrument for carrying out the wishes of the voters. Adult suffrage is finally so destructive of democracy that it ends in idolatry and despotism. In the preface to Geneva, Shaw

writes:

Such successes as they [conquerors] had were reactions from the failures of the futile parliamentary talking shops, which were themselves reactions from the bankruptcies of incompetent monarchs, both mobs and monarchs being products of idolatry and ignorance. The wider the suffrage, the greater the confusion.¹¹

We are embarked upon the Platonic cycle which moves from democracy to tyranny; this appears to be the people's choice.

The Widow in Geneva pokes fun at democracy. She comes from the Republic of Earthly Paradise, a miniature Utopia organized along the lines of Pure Democracy: the Church is abolished: the only authority recognized is that of the people's will. The president and the parliament are elected by adult suffrage every two years; so are all the judges, and all the officials, and all the road sweepers.¹²

Hipney has the last word on the critical faculty of the electorate:

. . . they were taken in by any nonsense they heard at the meetings or read in the morning paper. You could stampede them by crying out that the Russians were coming or rally them by promising them to hang the Kaiser, or Lord knows what silliness that shouldnt have imposed on a child of four. That was the end of democracy for me. (1213)

The granting of votes to women in 1928 did not contribute noticeably to the wisdom of the electorate. It was an absurdity, for the women immediately used their vote to keep other women out of parliament. Shaw's solution for getting women into politics is the coupled vote. As early as 1913 he wrote that what was needed was a constitutional amendment that all representative bodies shall consist of

men and women in equal numbers. The representative unit must not be a man or a woman but a man and a woman. Every vote to be valid had to be for a human pair.¹³ One is staggered by the enormity of the social revolution that the implementing of such a suggestion would involve. Yet Shaw believes that we are limiting our possible choice of the politically talented to half by not using the resources of women in politics.

4. Elections

In October 1929, Shaw made his debut on the newly developed wireless with an attack on his favorite subject:

. . . I am going to ask you to begin our study of Democracy by considering it first as a big balloon, filled with gas or hot air, and sent up so that you shall be kept looking up at the sky whilst other people are picking your pockets. When the balloon comes down to earth every five years or so you are invited to get into the basket if you can throw out one of the people who are sitting tightly in it; but as you can afford neither the time nor the money, and there are forty millions of you and hardly room for six hundred in the basket, the balloon goes up again with much the same lot in it and leaves you where you were before.¹⁴

Elections in a democracy are absurd. In the previous section the point of view was presented that the rulers found the electorate incompetent and ignorant in making decisions about government. From the standpoint of the electors, however, there is very little to choose from among the candidates.

Few capable men will run for parliament because government is a thankless job, says Magnus in The Apple

Cart. The people do not appreciate the work done because ninety-nine hundredths of it is unknown to them and the remaining hundredth is resented by them as an invasion of their liberty or an increase in their taxation. Likely candidates are loath to engage in the squalor of the political arena, in which they have to struggle with foolish factions in parliament and with ignorant voters in the constituencies. The drudgery wears out the strongest man or woman in five or six years:¹⁵

Politics, once the centre of attraction for ability, public spirit, and ambition, has now become the refuge of a few fanciers of public speaking and party intrigue who find all other avenues of distinction closed to them either by their lack of practical ability, their comparative poverty and lack of education, or, . . . their hatred of oppression and injustice, and their contempt for the chicaneries and false pretences of commercialized professionalism. (1025-6)

Besides, there is more money in business.

There is an urgent need to get able men into the political arena. Hipney, in On the Rocks, says:

Let em have a voice. Let em have a choice. Theyve neither at present Give em a choice between qualified men . . . but let them be qualified men and not windbags and movie stars and soldiers and rich swankers and lawyers on the make. (1213)

In Geneva, Begonia is interviewed about her political qualifications as a parliamentary candidate. She says, "I shall pick up all the politics I need when I get into the House."¹⁶ Admitting that she has no political ideas whatsoever and that she is a complete ignoramus, Sir Orpheus is confident that Begonia will be elected, "She has courage,

sincerity, good looks and publicity as the Geneva heroine. Everything that our voters love."¹⁷ She is absolutely unfitted to be a candidate for election to the government.

The voters have no real choice of candidates. They have to take what they can get and make the best of it according to their lights. It is only by chance that they find themselves represented in parliament by a fortunate proportion of reasonably honest and public spirited persons who also happen to be successful speakers, says Shaw. The rest are in parliament because they can afford it and have a fancy for it or an interest in it.¹⁸

Democracy must develop a method which will sort out the value of political aspirants. Shaw's suggestions in this regard will be fully discussed in the chapter on leadership. Here will be mentioned his praise of the Russian system which, he believed, is based on the natural history which teaches that every human group produces a percentage of persons with political faculty and public spirit who naturally volunteer for public work in their spare time. The primary committees at the municipal level elect secondary ones; this pyramid formation ends in the highly trained cabinet and praesidium at the top.¹⁹

At the end of his preface to Geneva, Shaw insists on the stricter screening of political aspirants:

Genuine democracy requires that the people shall choose their rulers, and, if they will, change them at

sufficient intervals; but the choice must be limited to the public spirited and politically talented, of whom Nature always provides not only the necessary percentage but superfluity enough to give the people a choice.²⁰

Nowhere does Shaw suggest how these capable people are to be persuaded to run for office, if the drudgery and difficulties are as gloomy as Magnus paints them.

5. Parliamentary Procedure

Votes for everyone was an expedient originally devised to prevent rulers from tyrannizing by the very effectual method of preventing them from doing anything at all, Shaw writes in the preface to The Apple Cart. Everything is left to irresponsible private enterprise which only acts towards its own profit. As a result a purely inhibitive check on tyranny has become a stranglehold on genuine democracy. The painfully evolved machinery of parliament and the party system and the cabinet have resulted in the effective obstruction of progress. It now takes thirty years by constitutional methods to do thirty minutes work. What we need is a Reform Bill that will create a complete revolution in our political machinery. When we see Parliaments like our own, kicked into the gutter by dictators in both kingdoms and republics, the only sane course is to take the step by which the dictatorship could have been averted, and construct a political system for rapid positive work made to fit in the twentieth century

instead of the sixteenth.²¹

In Buoyant Billions, the Son argues with his father about the slowness of the democratic parliamentary system. His vivid image illustrates a Marxian tenet:

Class war is rushing on us with tiger springs. The tiger has sprung in Russia, in Persia, in Mexico, in Turkey, in Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, everywhere if you count national strikes as acts of civil war. We are trying to charm the tiger away by mumbling old spells about liberty, peace, democracy, sanctions, open doors and closed minds, when it is scientific political reconstruction that is called for. (1368-9)

In the preface to Farfetched Fables, Shaw elaborates on this theme. The worst features of our sham democratic misgovernment are caused, not by incurable mental incapacity, but by an ignorance that is essentially mathematical. Political action must take place in four dimensions, one of which is TIME. The British parliamentary system is far too slow for twentieth century social organization. The Soviet system in Russia outstrips it because it is faster, being more immediately responsive to the continual need for reforms and adaptations to changing circumstances. It includes all the conventional democratic checks and safeguards [!] against despotism, which in a democracy are so illusory.²²

Shaw has some suggestions for the improvement of what he has come to regard as an obsolete parliamentary system. We need two or three additional federal legislatures working on the plan of our municipal committee systems with a central authority to co-ordinate the federal work. Our units of local government need to be enlarged to dimensions

compatible with recent prodigious advances in the facility of communication. Cabinet function needs to be transformed, and obsolete little frontiers in the civil service need to be obliterated. The general problem of government must be approached from a positive viewpoint at which mere anarchic national sovereignty as distinguished from self government will have no meaning.²³

If, as has been suggested, the ignorant electorate makes thoughtless choices from among an inept group of unlikely candidates who, while in office, are hamstrung by an obsolete system of government, how does the work involved in running the country get done? Shaw claims that the person elected to do the work is not really doing it: he is a popular humbug who is merely doing what a permanent official tells him to do:

That is how it comes about that we are now governed by a Civil Service which has such enormous power that its regulations are taking the place of the laws of England, though some of them are made for the convenience of the officials without the slightest regard to the convenience or even the rights of the public.²⁴

The Civil Service is selected by an educational test that nobody but an expensively schooled youth can pass, thus making the most powerful and effective part of our government an irresponsible class structure. Democracy is really bureaucracy.

6. Capitalism

The first problem of government, Shaw writes in the preface to The Apple Cart, is an economic one, how to produce and distribute our subsistence:

Our solution of the economic problem is the Capitalist system, which achieves miracles in production, but fails so ludicrously and disastrously to distribute its products rationally, or to produce in the order of social need, that it is always complaining of being paralyzed by its "over production" of things of which millions of us stand in desperate want.²⁵

Shaw denounces capitalism as a system which glorifies material success, is purposeless, and full of folly and greed.

The capitalist system upholds the right of ownership of private property which places the social value of the proprietor beyond question. Private property distributes wealth, work, and leisure so unevenly that the overworked majority is forced to maintain a moderately rich minority. In socialism, on the other hand, the gentleman is a vagabond or a vagrant. Men and women must live by their ordered and equal share in the work needed to support the community and must find their freedom in their ordered and equal share produced by scientific economy.²⁶

Oddly enough democracy and the capitalistic system are facing problems which have been forced upon them by the tremendous development of modern industry. Shaw states that the problem which confronts us is how to keep up with the

development of both socialism and communism, which is being forced on us by the growth of national and international corporate action. We are in the hands of both public and private corporate bodies for the satisfaction of our daily needs, and are at the mercy of all kinds of boards at every level:

Now corporate action is impossible without a governing body. It may be the central Government . . . a municipal corporation, a county council, a district council, or a parish council. Such boards, elected by the votes of the shareholders, are little States within the State and very powerful ones, too.²⁷

There is increasing control by the government of both the small bodies and also the gigantic trusts which wield immense power. In fact big business is making so many demands that government has more troubles with private corporations than with foreign powers:

Thus government, which used to be a comparatively simple affair, today has to manage an enormous development of Socialism and Communism. Our industrial and social life is set in a huge communistic framework of public roadways, streets, bridges, water supplies, power supplies, lighting, tramways, schools, dockyards, and public aids and conveniences, employing a prodigious army of police, inspectors, teachers, and officials of all grades in hundreds of departments. We have found by bitter experience that it is impossible to trust factories, workshops, and mines to private management. Only by stern laws enforced by constant inspection have we stopped the monstrous waste of human life and welfare it cost when it was left uncontrolled by the Government.²⁸

Democracy through capitalism appears forced by necessity into adopting socialism as the only form of workable government.

The power of capitalism lies in its control of money, and governments are constantly faced with the problem of

ruling the rich before they rule the world. "Money talks: money prints: money broadcasts: money reigns, and kings and labor leaders alike have to register its decrees, and, even by a staggering paradox to finance its enterprises and guarantee its profits," writes Shaw.²⁹ In the play, The Apple Cart, Lysistrata, the Powermistress Royal, bitterly attacks the control of government by big business interests;

. . . it [power] costs twice as much as it should. Why? Because every new invention is bought up and suppressed by Breakages, Limited. Every breakdown, every accident, every smash and crash, is a job for them. But for them we should have unbreakable glass, unbreakable steel, imperishable materials of all sorts Our national repair bill runs up to hundreds of millions I could name you a dozen inventions within my own term of office which would have effected enormous economies in breakages and breakdowns; but these people can afford to pay an inventor more for his machine or his process or whatever it may be than he could hope to make by a legitimate use of it; and when they have bought it they smother it. . . . It is infamous; it is outrageous; but if I attempt to fight them I shall be hounded out of public life, and they will shove Mouldy Mike into the Cabinet to run my department in their interests. (1027)

Even ministers who are Socialists to the backbone are helpless in the grip of Breakages Limited; from the moment when they attain power (meaning the drudgery of carrying on for the plutocrats) they dare not talk of nationalizing any industry that can yield any profit for plutocrats.³⁰ Unless they are carefully controlled, moneymakers will ruin the state, making their fortunes from the sales of liquor and other evils.

Because of their power the rich can drive out the poor "except those who are of nobler coinage" says Shaw. Epifania does this, mercilessly, when she takes over the

restaurant in The Millionairess. She maintains that legal difficulties do not exist for people with money. Money is power, security, freedom, and it provides the continual pleasure of making more of it; unfortunately this sometimes interferes with its enjoyment. Epifania stoutly insists that the rich are the only real aristocracy left in the world; the Egyptian doctor, however, describes plutocracy as a disease of modern life which only a revolution can cure.³¹

In Too True To Be Good, Shaw makes a plea for sympathy and understanding of the miserable plight of the rich as individuals. In the play three people acquire a great deal of money by selling a valuable pearl necklace. The end result of their unexpected affluence is a multitude of worries and a maddening dissatisfaction with life. "Our capitalistic system," writes Shaw, "with its golden exceptions of idle richness and its leaden rule of anxious poverty, is as desperate a failure from the point of view of the rich as of the poor." To some extent this misery of riches is a new thing. The local responsibilities of the old landed gentry made their lives useful. The new thing is riches detached from real property, routine, work, tradition, and responsibility.³²

Money can be a curse to the individual. The Patient in Too True To Be Good points out that the rich are devoured by parasites, tourist agencies, boat companies, railways, dressmakers, and servants, "showing me all over the globe,

disabling me by doing all the things for me that I ought to be doing for myself to keep myself in health."³³ Shaw pursues this theme in Buoyant Billions; Second Born points out, "So much has been done for us that we have learned to do hardly anything for ourselves." Darkie complains about her education;

We have bits and scraps of tastes and talents for scholarship, painting, playing musical instruments, writing, and talking.

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I have no talents, no accomplishments, except what I picked up doing just what I liked and was given everything I asked for. That has been harder than any schooling; and I sometimes blame my parents for not having thrashed the life out of me instead of leaving me to learn life's lessons by breaking my shins against them and falling into every booby trap. I was so over-petted that I had to learn or die. (1376-7)

The boredom of the rich is not destined to attract a wide sympathy, but the power of money in moulding public opinion and in swaying the decisions of government has been considered as a serious threat to democracy. "And everywhere," writes Shaw, "the rich pay the piper and call the tune. Naturally, they use their power to steal more money to continue paying the piper; and thus all society becomes a huge conspiracy and hypocrisy."³⁴

7. Liberty-Equality-Fraternity

Democracy regards man as being a creature of free will able to exercise freedom of choice. His sense of morality points out to him the difference between what he is and what he ought to be. He sees in his economic desires not only physical but spiritual dimensions. In politics he searches for principles of conduct which will promote the perfection of human nature and provide a social environment congenial to the development of these principles. In the Platonic view, individual freedom, become license, leads to social disintegration which ends in tyranny. The revolt against tradition and authority, the exaltation of instinct and desire above reason, the laxness of moral standards give way to rule by a master passion. Freedom, become license, creates a mounting burden of guilt; responsibility is gladly shifted to a tyrant.

In the preface to The Millionairess, Mussolini is praised for denouncing liberty as a putrefying corpse; what is needed is not liberty but discipline, the sterner the better, with no opposition.³⁵ Efficient commissioners who knew what the people really wanted were needed; they could then act effectively. When the Judge accuses Bombardone of the murder and destruction of liberty and democracy in Europe, he replies that such things never really existed. His business, he maintains, is to provide the people with as good govern-

ment as their folly and ignorance permit.³⁶ What more do they need? Further, since plutocracy has cut off the heads of kings and archbishops to make itself supreme and rob the people without interference from king or priest, the result is mob law, lynching, gangsterism; the equivalent of American democracy. Only a dictator can rescue his country from anarchy by his strong leadership. Bombardone boasts: I am a democratic institution.³⁷

Bombardone clearly equates the liberty of modern democracy with license. He points out the tendency towards anarchy in a system which interprets freedom as the right to demand certain considerations without paying social obligations. The present conflict between what some modern critics call the democracy of desire and the democracy of worth³⁸ repeats the ancient conflict argued by Callicles and Socrates.³⁹ The former praises the freedom which is the power to do what one wants; good is the gratification of desire and the pursuit of pleasure. The truly great and noble man is the one who lives by the law of nature: the weakest goes to the wall: might is right. The ugly thing is to suffer an injustice, not to commit one. Superior ability warrants the use of that ability according to individual judgment without scruple. The Socratic view parallels that of the democracy of worth. Freedom here is the power to serve God and one's fellow man, a means of promoting justice and the common good. Pleasure is insatiable; therefore the

pursuit of the disciplined ordered life directed towards the improvement of the condition of humanity, and the good of the soul as well as that of the body is the ideal. Citizens must not be manipulated: the statesman must be guided by moral principles.

In his contribution, a chapter, to Socialism and Individualism, Shaw describes the desire for personal liberty as being an element of natural anarchism in humanity, the belief that all affairs should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the state should be abolished. This conflicts with the socialist principle that has been forced upon our consideration by the growth in complexity of social organization in modern times, that is, the doctrine that all the affairs of men should be managed by the government, regardless of individual choice. Yet, though we dread liberty because it means responsibility, we will not exchange it. Shaw writes:

Establish a form of Socialism which shall deprive the people of their sense of personal liberty and though it double their rations and halve their working hours they will begin to conspire against it before it is a year old. We only disapprove of monopolists: we hate masters. ⁴⁰

In spite of man's resistance to encroachments on his personal freedom, Shaw insists that modern man who lives in a society must relinquish his belief that it is a natural right. Writing in the preface to English Prisons Under Local Government, he says:

Rousseau said that Man is born free. Rousseau was wrong. No government of a civilized state can possibly regard its citizens as born free. On the contrary, it must regard them as born in debt, and as necessarily incurring fresh debt every day they live; and its most pressing duty is to hold them to that debt and see that they pay it. Not until it is paid can any freedom begin for the individual When he has paid scot and lot his leisure begins and with it his liberty, . . . That is the only possible basis for civil liberty.⁴¹

It was in the eighteenth century that the confusion between the rule of nature and natural liberty was made. These two were thought to be identical in contrast to the "odious and stupid oppression of castes, priests, and kings, the detested 'dominion of man over man.'" Eventually we, in detecting the unsoundness of Adam Smith's private property and laissez-faire recipe for natural liberty, began to see that though there is political liberty there is no natural liberty, but only natural law remorselessly enforced. Nature leaves communities in no way free to choose whether they will labor or govern themselves. It is either that or starvation and chaos.⁴²

Democracy assumes that men are equal in spite of evidence that they are not so in any measurable physical or mental capacity. This assumption is based on the writings of eighteenth century thinkers who believed that environment and not heredity was the controlling factor in human development, and that equal educational opportunities would solve the problems of differences in ability. The principle was strengthened by the growth of resistance to the idea of an aristocracy which demanded preferment and distinction because

of birth or social attributes. Democracy demands that merit be awarded after an evaluation of individual worth, and not as a result of eminence of family name or monetary position. It recognizes equal recognition before the law, equal justice for all, no special privileges because of social status, and freedom to work to find one's place in society. The Christian dogma that teaches that all men have souls of equal worth in the sight of God, and equal power of moral judgment strengthened the major premise of equality.

Shaw, with a tendency to classify human beings as either geniuses or idiots, does not argue that men are equal in ability. He is concerned in several instances with the evaluation of individuals, for example, in assessing the political capacity of our leaders, and in personal evaluation in considering the advisability of extermination; however, he points out that social inequality is inherent in democracy and must be eliminated. In the preface to Geneva he writes:

Equality, which in practice means intermarriageability, is based on the hard facts that the greatest genius costs no more to feed and clothe and lodge than the narrowest minded duffer, and at a pinch can do with less, and that the most limited craftsman or laborer who can do nothing without direction from a thinker, is, if worth employing at all, as necessary and important socially as the ablest director. Equality between them is either equality of income and of income only or an obvious lie.⁴³

Equality of income is the only equality which we should bother about; this is achieved only through socialism. Equality with regard to the right to vote, and the right to justice are fundamental in a democratic organization.

In the preface to Too True To Be Good, Shaw blames the failure of Christianity in part upon the corruption of the early church by its acquisition of private property. The Christian system failed

not because it was wrong in its psychology, its fundamental postulate of equality, or its anticipation of Lenin's principle that the rulers must be as poor as the ruled so that they can raise themselves only by raising their people, but because the old priests' ignorance of economics and political science blinded them to the mischief latent in the selfishness of private property in the physical earth.⁴⁴

Shaw admits that democracy is founded upon principles of Christian conduct, but these may be a hazard rather than a help. In Geneva, Battler considers that the kind of mind that has been "formed in infancy by the Jewish scriptures is the real obstacle to human progress." The plea of the Deaconess that we love one another is brushed aside by the Secretary.

It turns out that we do not and cannot love one another -- that the problem before us is how to establish peace among people who heartily dislike one another, and have very good reasons for doing so: in short, that the human race does not at present consist exclusively or even largely of likeable persons. (1327)

If man is to survive and make further progress he must learn how to achieve the rational and not the emotional cooperation of mankind.

Blackham points out that liberty, equality, and fraternity can be enjoyed only in a society which provides what is needful and exacts what is due, obedience as well as liberty, subordination as well as equality, veneration as well

as fraternity.⁴⁵ Shaw would, I think, agree that these three principles have validity only as they are combined with individual responsibility.

8. Alternatives to Democracy

In an earlier part of this chapter it was pointed out that the logical outcome of the inefficiency present in democratic government was the development of a dictatorship. The dictator achieved control by frank force or by democratic ballot, sometimes winning election by a majority vote as Hitler did. He was chosen because he seemed to have authority and personal powers that commanded respect and could offer solutions to the problems which the people seemed incapable of solving themselves. Further he accepted responsibility for his actions and decisions.

Shaw expresses a persistent sympathy for the man of genius, who, as a heretic bent on making the world conform to himself instead of himself to the world, effects progress. In the play Geneva, written in 1938, Shaw praised the European dictators, insisting that their reforms were advances. However, in the preface to Geneva which was written in 1945, he had to admit that in spite of their effecting some obvious reforms, Hitler and Mussolini were political failures. Their few successes were the result rather of a reaction to the fumbings of democratic government than to any acute

political insight.⁴⁶ Hitler failed to make his initial conquests permanent and welcome because he did not improve the condition of the inhabitants. Shaw writes:

The moral for conquerors of armies is that if they substitute savagery for civilization they are doomed. If they substitute civilization for savagery, they make good and establish a legitimate [!] title to the territories they invade.⁴⁷

In The Apple Cart, Shaw presents a searching analysis of democracy and monarchy shattering popular misconceptions about both. He does not believe that a constitutional monarch is a figurehead, or that the prime minister and his cabinet are responsible politicians. Unless the prime minister is dominant and very able he is helpless in the hands of officials or parliament. On the other hand the king is not beholden to his electors for his job, at which he works all his life and not only for a few years in his old age, as some cabinet ministers do.⁴⁸

Woodbridge calls Shaw a frustrated royalist, perhaps because of his strong characterization of King Magnus in the play.⁴⁹ Shaw argues in favor of the monarchical system over the parliamentary. He exposes the foibles and follies of the Labor Cabinet ministers, and presents them as crude and vulgar opportunists engaged in competition for power. Only rarely do they appear to be truly concerned over their jobs. On the other hand, Magnus is able and astute, showing wit, sagacity, and a high sense of dignity and a rare perceptiveness in analyzing human character in a cabinet of windbag

bureaucrats and neurasthenics. Because of his long experience with government, Magnus persuades us that he would make an excellent ruler if he had the power; in spite of his lack of the freedom to act his influence is enormous. We are tempted to believe that Shaw is advocating a return to monarchical rule. In the preface to On the Rocks, however, Shaw presents an argument against a ruling monarchy:

. . . we cannot expect the very energetic and vital Napoleon to be the son of an equally energetic father or the father of an equally vital son. Nobody has yet calculated how many lazy ancestors it takes to produce an indefatigable prodigy; but it is certain that dynasties of geniuses do not occur, and that is the decisive objection to hereditary rulers (although not, let me hasten to add, to hereditary figureheads).⁵⁰

Shaw continually states that all the world's finest achievements are the work of exceptional individuals and highly intelligent people found in all classes. However, in the fallow period between geniuses in government, another form than democracy must be found to provide the best government; Shaw advocates socialism.

In his first collection of essays on socialism Shaw brands the Fabian variety as Social Democracy. He states that the economic achievement of socialism involves the transfer of rent "from the class which now appropriates it to the whole people." He writes:

The economic object of Socialism is . . . to carry out the principle [of equalization] over the whole community by collecting all rents and throwing them into the national treasury The socialization of rent would mean the socialization of the sources of production

by the expropriation of the present private proprietors and the transfer of their property to the entire nation.⁵¹

This change would have to come about slowly. Shaw blames some of the problems of the Russians in effecting reforms on their failure to recognize the inevitability of gradualness and attempting a catastrophic transfer of industry and agriculture from private to public ownership.

The touchstone of socialism is equality of income. In The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, Shaw deals in detail with the proposed reconstruction of society which disposes of the idle rich and also the idle poor. He writes:

. . . Socialism means equality of income or nothing, and that under Socialism you would not be allowed to be poor. You would be forcibly fed, clothed, lodged, taught, and employed whether you liked it or not. If it were discovered that you had not character and industry enough to be worth all this trouble, you might possibly be executed in a kindly manner; but while you were permitted to live you would have to live well.⁵²

Not only the material products, but also work and leisure are to be distributed equally among the people. Socialism is the agency which, having power and goodwill, shares the gifts of nature justly.

In the preface to Too True To Be Good, Shaw attacks private property which distributes work, wealth, and leisure so unevenly that a wretchedly poor and miserably overworked majority is forced to maintain an inordinately rich minority convinced that any work done by them is disgraceful. In praise of socialism, Shaw writes a fiery sermon:

And so we are driven to the conclusion that the modern priesthood must utterly renounce, abjure, abhor, abominate, and annihilate private property as the very worst of all the devil's inventions for the demoralization and damnation of mankind. Civilized men and women must live by their ordered and equal share in the work needed to support the community, and must find their freedom in their ordered and equal share of the leisure produced by scientific economy in producing that support.⁵³

In the same preface Shaw writes that the real opposition to socialism comes from the well founded fear that it would cut off the possibility of a man becoming enormously rich, which capitalism, through its encouragement of private property and private enterprise strongly encourages.⁵⁴ In the play, Shaw presents the view that the rich are besieged by difficulties, and are unhappy and bored as well; riches do not provide the solution to personal problems.

In On the Rocks, Sir Arthur Chavender attacks the capitalist system for producing a society of parasites. He says:

I know that half the working class is slaving away to pile up riches, only to be smoked out like a hive of bees and plundered of everything but a bare living by our class. But what is the other half doing? Living on the plunder at second hand. Plundering the plunderers. As fast as we fill our pockets with rent and interest and profits they're emptied again by West End tradesmen and hotel keepers, fashionable doctors and lawyers and parsons and fiddlers. (1210)

Not only do the rich plunder the poor, but the working class is hopelessly divided against itself. Shaw has no romantic illusions about the virtues of the poor; they too are caught in the toils of the system that idolizes wealth. The real class war is not the material conflict between rich and poor,

but a moral one between those who are in the world for what they can get out of it and those who want to make it a better place for everybody to live in.⁵⁵

Only a radical change in the form of government can solve the problem of optimum wealth distribution. It will not yield to the "well-intentioned Utopian amateurs who infest our parliaments and our parties, imagining that it can be solved by giving us all according to our needs and balancing the account by taking from each of us according to our productive capacity." Shaw was perturbed by the failure of the labor government under Ramsay Macdonald to achieve a signal success. Under a plebian government the plunder goes to the trade unions, which is an improvement,

but when the plebian government attempts to re-organize production collectively so as to increase the product and bring the highest culture within the reach of all who are capable of it, and make the necessary basic material prosperity general and equal, the dread and hatred of government as such, calling itself Liberty and Democracy reasserts itself and stops the way. Only when a war makes collective organization compulsory on pain of slaughter, subjugation, and nowadays extinction by bombs, jet propelled or atomic, is any substantial advance made or men of action tolerated as Prime Ministers.⁵⁶

In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw points out that in national emergencies the country turns to socialism to solve its problems. He writes:

. . . it is fortunate that war on the modern scale is so completely beyond the capacity of private capitalism that, as in 1915, it forces the belligerents into national factory production, public discipline and rationed distribution: in short, into Socialism. Not only did national factories spring up like mushrooms, but the private factories had to be brought up to the mark by public control.⁵⁷

Even in peacetime the increasing number of state services which we expect makes it clear that we have a socialist or communist organization within our democratic framework. We have no intention whatever of

going back to turnpike roads, toll bridges, private detectives and prizefighters for police, sixpenny linkmen for municipal electric lighting, cadis under palm trees for judges, condottieri and privateers for national defence, profiteers for Exchequer Chancellors: in short, the substitution of private enterprise for the omnipresent Communism without which our civilization could not endure for a week⁵⁸

Yet we keep shouting our abhorrence of Communism instead of realizing that we are forced into this scheme of organization by sheer pressure of facts.

It would seem that the Russian communist system cannot operate without a few capitalistic devices. Shaw writes that the Bolsheviks brought their country to the verge of ruin and a little over by their "All or Nothing Catastrophism", and were finally forced by the facts to make room for more private enterprise than there is in England:

The moment it did so, the basic difference between British and Russian economic policy vanished or criss-crossed. Lenin and Stalin had to cry 'laissez-faire' to all the enterprises not yet ripe for nationalization.⁵⁹

While Shaw showed a great deal of admiration for all the European dictators seemingly without preference, he chose the Russian system of government as most closely approaching the ideal. In the preface to The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, he praises the Russian government for breaking away from the "Capitalist Utopia and adopting the views of the

Bolshevist prophets, whose invectives and warnings fill the last books of the Old Testament [!], and the Communist principles of Jesus, Peter, and Paul:"

They call their economic system, not Bolshevik Christianity, but Scientific Socialism. But as their conclusions are the same, they have placed every Russian under a legal obligation to earn his own living, and made it a capital crime on his part to compel anyone else to do it for him.⁶⁰

In the preface to Too True To Be Good, Shaw points out that the staggering fact is that the Russians, having rooted out all resemblances to the Church, have established as their system of government one which is a "close as possible reproduction" of that of the Catholic Church.⁶¹ The Soviet system, "hammered out under the sternest pressures of circumstances supplies an excellent provisional solution which turns out to be the solution of the Old Catholic Church purged of supernatural pretension, assumption of final perfection, and the poison of private property with its fatal consequences." Shaw's praise of the pyramidal structure of government was noted earlier; the result of this formation was the training of people for government from among those who were interested enough in it to work long hours without extra pay in their leisure time.⁶²

This dedication appeared in Shaw's eyes to be commensurate with the assumption of responsibility, the lack of which Shaw greatly deplored among the democratic politicians. He writes:

Stalin and Mussolini are the most responsible statesmen in Europe because they have no hold on their places except their efficiency; and their authority is consequently greater than that of any of the monarchs, presidents, and prime ministers who have to deal with them.⁶³

Shaw indirectly likens them to the early priesthood of the Church who were self elected to the office, responding to the impulse of the Holy Ghost within. They had a common faith as to the fundamental conditions of a stable society, and represented the conscience of the common people. Without this their authority would collapse.⁶⁴ Another positive attribute of the Communist government is its stand with regard to an evaluation of human worth, "formulated long ago by Paul the Apostle, if any would not work, neither should he eat."⁶⁵

Shaw emphasizes the importance of the Russian system as the only really new departure from the democratic scheme. Fascism (in 1934) was still wavering between the Empire and the Church, between private property and communism.⁶⁶

9. Conclusion

In the preface to Too True To Be Good, Shaw lists ten natural conditions of human society. In brief they are:

1. Government is necessary.
2. It must be performed by human rulers and agents as best they can.
3. Rulers must check selfish behavior of individuals.
4. Rules of conduct consider the necessary sacrifice of individual liberty for the good of the community.
5. The paradox of government is to enslave everyone ruthlessly while securing the greatest possible freedom for him.

6. The government's major concern is with the production and the distribution of wealth and the sharing of labor and leisure equitably. The individual is compelled to behave properly and to work productively.
7. The moral slavery allows of no liberty.
8. Leisure is in the sphere of individual liberty: labor is in the sphere of slavery.
9. People who think that they can be free all the time are idiots; those who seek freedom by making others work for them are thieves.
10. Slavery used to denote subjection to government is only expedient to explain things to fools according to their folly.⁶⁷

Shaw is concerned with what he considers the failure of people to govern themselves in a democratic system. They are ignorant of the problems involved and they don't care, being willing to let almost anyone else do the job for them. The system of adult suffrage, elections, and parliamentary procedure hinders the process of government, making it slow and inefficient. The people, becoming impatient with the delay, turn to dictators. Economically the democratic system favors the development of capitalism which encourages private property and free enterprise techniques which create glaring inequalities of income and social evils. Shaw is convinced that Socialism, already present in the system, would provide the solution to the two major problems, the distribution of wealth and the problems of governing the people.

Shaw is undecided, however, as to whether democracy is a form of government or a philosophy. He says that real democracy leaves wide open the question as to which method best secures it: monarchy, parliament nominated or elected

with or without proportional representation, restricted franchise, intervals between general elections or other checks and balances devised to prevent glaring abuses of virtually irresponsible power.⁶⁸

As a philosophy, democracy is a residue of a number of assumptions dating back to Stoic and more ancient times: the respect for human personality, conscience, and the human dignity of man, the reality of the universal to obey moral law, which in the long run cannot be permanently divorced from religion. Although Christianity may be found in all forms of government, it is in democracy that the principle of the availability of the community of resources receives the greatest consideration, and the importance of the individual is stressed above that of the state. Democracy as a form of government is a delicate mechanism, indefinable, no better than the people who make it up, and its development is related to the good intentions of the people. Politics is an art and not a science, and what is required is not the rationality of an engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of a statesman.⁶⁹

III

THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction

The first part of this thesis has dealt with the point of view that man is an instrument of the Life Force, evolving continually and attempting to gain control over his material environment. By means of the sex instinct, which is irresistible, Nature brings together individuals who will produce the best possible children. In the woman, the strongest desire is for motherhood; to achieve this end she takes the initiative, contrary to the beliefs of the romanticists, and pursues and conquers her mate. The driving force in the man is aimed at achieving power through knowledge; it results in the development of the man of genius, the superman, who exhibits his special gifts in the arts, government, and invention. The Life Force is unconcerned with society in its powerful race to achieve a greater consciousness. It is self-centered, unmoral, and aggressive in its great struggle by trial and error to achieve greater power of contemplating itself.

Chapter two has been concerned with Shaw's criticism of society. This, particularly democracy, has forced man to conform to standards which are inhibiting to the free development of the Life Force. By providing him with some security,

society enables him to develop further than he could possibly do in an isolated or primitive state. Yet it deprives him of his freedom to act spontaneously and freely by burdening him with conventions, laws, and duties, against which he chafes continually. He strives to find a form of government which will make the fewest demands upon him as an individual, yet provide the most efficient organization for his comfort and leisure. Shaw proposes socialism as a more enlightened form of government; in a socialistic government, cognizance is taken of those who want to govern because of the promptings of the Life Force within them, and are willing to give up leisure time to learn how to rule. They are not influenced by the enticements of power, money, and social position which, in a democracy, attract many who are totally unfitted to govern. Curiously, although Shaw accepts the Life Force as a power making mistakes though with the best of intentions, he deplores the fact that democracy operates in the same way; society, as government, must avoid the trial and error method for something more concrete.

The third part of this thesis deals with the themes of man and society in conflict with the demands made on the individual by the Life Force and the dues exacted by society for his membership within it. Huxley describes the conflict as arising between the cosmic process and man-imposed ethical process.¹ I would agree that the main problem is a moral one which is practically non-existent when man lives alone.

Among the themes Shaw deals with are the problems of the leader in influence and control, war, and extermination of the unfit, which directly concern government as a whole, and moral standards, self betterment, and man's progress which most directly involve the individual rather than the state. The problem of morality, however, is predominant in all the conflicts.

2. The Leader

On the Rocks, written in 1931, is a political comedy which deals with the tragedy of a weak prime minister who fails in his responsibility and brings his country to the verge of ruin. Shaw makes his most serious attack on democracy in this play. In the face of a severe national crisis brought on by the depression, no one can be found who is willing or able to take charge of the government. Sir Arthur Chavender resigns, and in looking for a successor, appeals to the Duke to take on the position. The Duke refuses with these words:

. . . I'm so accustomed as a duke to be treated with the utmost deference that I simply don't know how to assert myself and bully people This job needs a man with nothing to lose, plenty of hard driving courage, and a complete incapacity for seeing any side of a question but his own I shall encourage the dictator when he comes as far as I can without committing myself dangerously. (1212)

If Shaw did not intend to prophesy the rise of dictators in half the countries of Europe during the thirties, he voiced the mood of depression prevalent at the time, and society's desperate search for a leader.

Choosing a leader is one of the greatest problems encountered by modern democratic society. In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw suggests that the best leader might be he who is servant to all the rest, recalling the New Testament stipulation and the Platonic view that reluctance to govern is a leading symptom of supreme fitness to do so. This is an idealistic approach; for all practical purposes, ambition must not be discounted. If a leader can command men only so long as he is efficient and successful, his rule is neither a tyranny nor a calamity: it is a valuable asset. Authority attached to public officials must rest on their ability and efficiency.² In the play In Good King Charles's Golden Days, Charles tells his wife that though there must be a good supply of political talent available, we are unable to solve the problem of how to discover it. He says:

In every nation there must be the makings of a very capable council and a capable king three or four times over if we only knew how to pick them. No one has ever found out how to do it: that is why the world is so vilely governed.

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Heredity is no use. Learning Latin is no use: Jack Churchill, who is an ignoramus is worth fifty scholars.

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No, beloved, the riddle of how to rule the world is still unanswered; and it is the riddle of civilization. (1365)

Shaw discusses the problem of leadership in some detail in the preface to Geneva. When we face the democratic task of forming panels of persons eligible for choice as qualified

rulers, we find that none of our tests are trustworthy or efficient, and in the end we do not get qualified rulers but bosses.³

Shaw bewails the fact that there are all kinds of tests for all kinds of people except public administrators. Those elected at present are unable to cope with the public departments which are manned by school-tested permanent executives, the civil service. Elections do not remove them; the people have no real choice. When they pass the competitive examination, they are there for life. Consequently we have a bureaucracy, not a democracy. These tests tend to exclude born rulers. The questions asked, the problems set, and answers and solutions accepted by the elderly examiners soon become known, enabling professional crammers to coach any sixth form schoolboy to pass the test, to the exclusion of up-to-date candidates who know better than their examiners, yet are unconscious of their mental superiority.⁴

In the preface to Farfetched Fables, Shaw explores the idea of developing a test to evaluate leadership. What we need desperately, he says, is an anthropometric slide rule by which we can classify and select our rulers, most of whom at present are either "rich nonentities, venal careerists, or round pegs." The Third Fable is set in an anthropometric laboratory. A Tramp appears on the Isle of Wight, in this far off Utopia, the exclusive domain of the Upper Ten; he is "welcomed" by the Gentleman in the following manner:

I'll have you arrested and put through the laboratory and classified. That is the law, compulsory for everybody. If you refuse you may be classed as irresponsible. That means be enlisted in the military police or kept under tutelage in a Labor Brigade. Or you may be classed as dangerous and incorrigible, in which case you'll be liquidated. (1395)

The Tramp is classified as a genius, although he says he is a duffer. He laughs when the Gentleman points out that he may have administrative ability, and be cunning enough to shirk its responsibilities, "one of the Artful Dodgers who knows that begging is easier and happier than bossing." He replies:

You'll find I can do nothing I'm a duffer, a hopeless duffer. I can always see what the other fellows ought to do; but I can't do it. I've tried my hand at everything: no use: I've failed every time. I've tastes but no talents I know a lot, and can do nothing. When I tell the clever chaps what to do, they won't do it, and tell me I'm ignorant and crazy. And so I am: I know it only too well. (1395)

Shaw insists that a true test of a candidate's capacity must be devised. The first prerequisite for this is to see that schoolmasters have no part in it. Schools make up examinations that stress encyclopedic memory and pedantry and these are absolutely useless in determining political acumen. Shaw does have some positive suggestions. The population must be tested and classified according to ability. The members of a panel aspiring to be the health authority must be examined on statistics. The top panel, wishing to become Secretaries of State or Finance Ministers, must include people with a knowledge of the theory of rent and the theory of

exchange value. They should also be required to pass an esthetic test in which they would name famous paintings, recognize symphonies, and discuss masterpieces of literature. The subconscious capacities are most difficult to ascertain. Shaw asks, "How are we to distinguish between the unconscious genius and the idiot?" He does not know, but suggests that a professional "psychotherapist" be called in. Having survived this battery of tests, candidates would be qualified to stand for election.⁵

Once elected the leader encounters a multitude of problems requiring expert statesmanship. Shaw complains in the preface to Geneva, that the rule of vast commonwealths is beyond the political capacity of mankind at its ablest. Leaders waste time in games of "child's play calibre" instead of engaging in the exercises of statesmen and senators. Even when they have read Plato, the Gospels, and Karl Marx, and to that extent know what to do, they do not know how to do it. Only rarely do cases of extraordinary ability and faculty appear to show what man is capable of doing.⁵

The way to better leadership and better government is through more extensive training. Statesmen must know past history. Those who don't are dangerous because contemporary history cannot be ascertained; they have to grope through daily emergencies within the limits of their ignorance as best they can. There is a need for confining authority to the instructed and capable. Shaw attempts to rationalize

the terrible slaughter in the Nazi concentration camps as a case of inefficient government. He says that only eminent leadership, experience, and organizing talent could have dealt with such a situation. Had there been efficient handling of the problem by the authorities none of these atrocities would have occurred. (His argument is painfully weak.) There must also be a reform in the school curriculum and an organized attempt to educate the voters. "Education will teach them to understand," says the Prime Minister in On the Rocks. Hipney is doubtful, "You can't teach people anything they don't want to know."⁷

In What I Really Wrote About The War, Shaw praised the formation of the League of Nations as a training ground for leaders on the international level. He writes:

The really great thing that is happening at Geneva is the growth of a genuinely international public service, the chiefs of which are ministers in a coalition which is, in effect, an incipient international statesmanship as against the old foreign office diplomacy.⁸

Later, in Geneva, he chides the League for failing to achieve better understanding. The Secretary advocates Supernationalism. He says:

Internationalism is nonsense We need something higher than nationalism: a genuine political and social catholicism. How are you to get that from these patriots, with their national anthems and flags and dreams of war and conquest rubbed into them from their childhood? (1304)

The Secretary makes a strong plea for the farsighted kind of political thinking that aims at world-wide understanding in one breath and then continues paradoxically to denounce the

League as an organization which encourages war by bringing together nations who disagree.

Another problem confronts the leader, and that is how to make his reforms acceptable to the mass of people having a widely varying range of mental ability. Upon election he is immediately faced with the prospect of establishing and maintaining his authority. The old theory of the divine right of kings was an invaluable aid to the ruler, Magnus claims in The Apple Cart:

The old divine theory worked because there is a divine spark in us all; and the stupidest or worst monarch or minister, if not wholly god, is a bit of a god--an attempt at a god--however little the bit and unsuccessful the attempt. (1013)

In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw writes that the leader must be thought to be indispensable, so he resorts to divine law or appeals to revelation to enhance this myth. He cannot allow ordinary man to think him insane or impious, however, and so he conceals complexities or masks them as follies the common man will think splendid.⁹ The leader must persuade people it is a war to end all wars and that the enemy are scoundrels. Although the peace treaty contains seeds for half a dozen wars, with impossible conditions and certain violations, he must create the belief that it is the charter of eternal peace and retributive justice. He must assume various guises, and use persuasion and coercion if necessary, in order to keep his hold over the average man. The most well-intentioned ruler may become a tyrant and

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master of deception. The ordinary citizen has a right to be suspicious of the leader because, unless he is totally unselfish, he will not sacrifice his own interests to the permanent interests of the nation and the world.¹⁰

The leader is inhibited by society's fundamental resistance to change and a dread of government interference. Other deterrents to progress are ancient constitutions and creeds, inheritances from feudal and ecclesiastical systems which were set up to provide law and order in the intervals between the dominant personalities produced by nature. Further, it is only when war makes collective organization compulsory that any substantial advance is made or men of action tolerated as prime ministers. Shaw reminds us in the preface to Geneva, that the first four years of the war (probably World War I), forced us to choose a man of action as leader, but when the armistice was signed, we got rid of him and had a succession of premiers who could be trusted to do nothing revolutionary. It would seem that social change takes place only when the circumstances create such emergencies, changes, and hardships that the very people who dread government action are the first to run to the government for help. Ordinary governments must mark time until the advent of the next popular idol.¹¹

If he is to succeed, the ruler must make a truce with the business interests. Shaw reminds us that Hitler's first attempt at revolution put him in prison for eight months.

When he came out he immediately came to terms with the captains of finance and industry, and the Conservatives, "who really control the nations wherever the people choose what rulers they please." With their support and his own histrionic magnetism, Hitler soon achieved a real personal power, being idolized as a hero and a prophet.¹²

Although the leader may have risen to power as a revolutionary, his first official action is likely to be to dispose of others of this kind. Shaw discusses the problem of tolerance in the little play within the preface to On the Rocks. In a conversation with Jesus, Pilate describes the ruler's problem in making decisions. He says:

If you were a responsible governor instead of a poetic vagrant, you would soon discover that my choice must lie, not between truth and falsehood, neither of which I can ever ascertain, but between reasonable and well informed opinion and sentimental and ill informed impulse.¹³

Pilate states that it is his responsibility to uphold the law; Jesus maintains that it is only through sedition and blasphemy that the world moves nearer the kingdom of God. This is the ancient conflict between the advanced vision of the man of genius and the prevailing social code. The problem of toleration involves distinguishing the genius from the madman. Pilate continues:

And am I to spare and encourage every heretic, every rebel, every lawbreaker, every rascalion lest he should turn out to be wiser than all the generations who made the Roman law and built up the Roman empire on it?¹⁴

Jesus's reply is that the wise are known by their deeds and

that killing a thought might be fatal to the foundation of the kingdom of God on earth. The leader must accept the responsibility for making the decision.

Shaw insists that a civilization cannot progress without criticism and that the state must not only tolerate propositions that are interesting, statesmanlike, and respectable, but also those that shock the uncritical as obscene, seditious, blasphemous, heretical, and revolutionary. The difficulty for the leader is to distinguish between the critic and the criminal or lunatic. Shaw says that we are so dangerously uneducated in citizenship, that most of us assume that we have an unlimited right to change our conduct the minute we have changed our minds. The hostile critic of the existing order cannot behave as if he were living in his own particular Utopia. Not until the criticism changes the law, can the magistrate allow the critic to give effect to it. Neither can the state believe that anyone who breaks the law is a fair game for the torturers; our judges must be more widely educated than they are today.¹⁵

In The Apple Cart, Shaw presents the dilemma of a natural leader who is restrained from acting because he is a constitutional monarch without any real power. Magnus complains that the position of the monarch has greatly deteriorated. In ancient times the king was revered as a god; now he is

an idol set up by a group of plutocrats so they can rule the country with the king as their scapegoat and puppet. Presidents, now, are chosen by the people who always want a Strong Man to protect them against the rich. (1014)

Magnus is disparaging his position as usual. Nicobar, like other members of the cabinet, is led to believe that the king is totally powerless; however, Proteus is astute enough to see through the king's subterfuge, and points out the characteristic of singlemindedness that is common to all great leaders. He says:

If you all start quarrelling and scolding and bawling, which is what he wants you to do, it will end in his having his own way as usual, because one man that has a mind and knows it can always beat ten men who havnt and dont. (1016)

Proteus realizes that Magnus has the politician's greatest talent, the ability to make moving speeches. He insists that Magnus stop expressing his opinion as an individual, and "working the press from the palace back stairs." Magnus refuses to accept the role of the constitutional monarch as a figurehead; he objects to having to give up the prerogative of the veto, also. This, he claims, is the only defence that the people have against corrupt legislation.

In Magnus, Shaw epitomizes the ideal ruler, a philosopher king. Sempronius says of him, "Our king could have lived there [on an uninhabited island], for thirty years with nothing but his thoughts."¹⁶ He conforms to a popular ideal of dignity and good breeding: his impeccable manners are invaluable in dealing with people, and perfect self-control allows him no indulgence in temper tantrums, or bullyings, or sneerings common among his ministers, who use these tactics to subdue the timid and unreasonable. In the

speech quoted below, Shaw reveals his awareness of the role of the continuity of the monarchy in enhancing its prestige and in providing the link between the present and the past.

Magnus says:

I stand for the future and the past, for the posterity that has no vote and for the tradition that never had any. I stand for the great abstractions: for conscience and virtue; for the eternal against the expedient; for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony; for intellectual integrity, for humanity, for the rescue of industry from commercialism and science from professionalism (1026)

The king can wield great moral power from the vantage point of an invincible social position. The security of a king enables him to escape the dreadful and demoralizing drudgery of electioneering and to undertake responsibilities which the prime minister cannot. The social importance of the Court is a notable weapon. "If a newspaper magnate dares offend me," he says, "his wife and daughter suffer socially."¹⁷ In the end Magnus refuses to sign the ultimatum, "because by doing so, I should be making personal promises which I know I should break I have forces within me which your constitutional limits cannot hold in check."¹⁸ Magnus makes a strong bid for dictatorship on Shaw's old plea that democracy has destroyed all other responsibility: he will assume all responsibilities and face all reproaches.

The preface to The Millionairess is devoted to an examination of the nature of authority. Shaw discusses the serious problem of how the mediocre private citizen can hold

his own with the "masterful women or able bullies" who rule us, amiably, by being able to think more quickly and to see further than others, or tyrannically and violently, by the intensity of their will and ruthless egotism. A born boss is "one who rides roughshod over us by some mysterious power that separates him from our species and makes us fear him: that is, hate him." Our boasted political liberties are a mockery, continues Shaw, in the face of these despotisms. They work well when the despot is benevolent, but they are worse than any political tyranny in the selfish cases, yet the same force that makes the individual tyrant elevates him to the top by a gravitation that ordinary people cannot resist.¹⁹

In the preface to The Apple Cart, Shaw deplores the fact that we cannot govern ourselves; yet if we entrust the immense powers and revenues which are necessary in an effective modern government to an absolute monarch or dictator, he goes mad unless he is a quite extraordinary person, who is a rarity. We need to be governed, yet to control our governors, but the best governors will not accept any control except that of their own consciences.²⁰ In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw examines the problem of the corruption of the leader by power. He says:

Make any common fellow an autocrat and at once you have the Beggar on Horseback riding to the devil
Uncommon people, promoted on their merits, are by no means wholly exempt from megalomania.²¹

Lord Acton's dictum that power corrupts can give no idea of

the extent to which flattery, deference, power, and apparently unlimited money, can upset and demoralize simpletons who, in their proper places, are good fellows enough. To them the exercise of authority is not a heavy and responsible job, but a delightful sport to be indulged in for its own sake, and asserted and reasserted by cruelty and monstrosity.²²

Power may be a civilizing influence. Shaw says that the political usurper may be an infernal scoundrel, ruthless in murder, treachery, and torture; but once his ambition is achieved and he has to rule a nation, the magnitude and difficulty of his job and the knowledge that if he makes a mess of it he will fall as suddenly as he has risen, will civilize him with a ruthlessness greater than his own. The problem is that nobody knows beforehand what the sudden acquisition of power will do. The question remains: How can we make sure that the decisions are going to be made in the general interest and not solely in the immediate personal interest of the leader?²³ We have ceased to believe in the doctrine that what is best for one is best for everybody. We need to make the ruler and the ruled the subjects and agents of a political constitution applying humane principles which neither may violate. In this case autocrats are no longer autocrats.²⁴

Mere liquidation of the dominators is disastrous, writes Shaw, because at present only about five percent of

the population are capable of making decisions of any importance, and without these, civilization would go to pieces. The remedy lies in allowing them to multiply to what might be called their natural minority limit which will destroy their present scarcity value. "But we must also eliminate the mass of ignorance, weakness, and timidity which force them to treat fools according to their folly."²⁵ Shaw barely hints at extermination here. He closes by saying that the dominators must continue to dominate, and society to so order its institutions that it will not be oppressed.

This year, 1964, is another election year in the United States, and responsible people there are concerned with the perennial problems of evaluating leadership, as Shaw was. How can the electorate determine whether a potential president will provide effective leadership? What standards shall be used for selecting candidates? How useful are background, training, and experience in evaluating competence? Sidney Warren, in an article in The Saturday Review, discusses the achievements of many American presidents and makes some interesting comments.²⁶

Shaw would agree that the presidency is pre-eminently a position of moral leadership; we are in the end at the mercy of the conscience of the ruler because the constitution cannot cover every eventuality. In a crisis, the leader must rely on his instincts and intuition. He must

have confidence in his own judgment, and make vital decisions involving life and death for which he, and he alone, is responsible, in the "splendid misery" of high office. Achievement, training, and service count, but decisiveness under stress is more important. Most of the presidents who made a lasting impact were ambitious men who wanted the job and approached it with zest and enthusiasm. The born bosses, like Epifania and Prola, revel in power. Warren and Shaw would agree that campaign rhetoric and political oratory can be discounted to a large extent, but it is necessary that public opinion be properly educated, that the people understand the situation in order to back up the action; this can be done only if the facts are vividly presented to them.

Shaw insists on greater knowledge in both his leaders and in the electorate, but he would agree that the real power of the leader is intangible, an unconscious genius (the grip of the Life Force), the capacity to inspire the people, to set a tone for the nation so that the vision of the future becomes the objective for the present. The leader must be both a politician and a statesman. A test for this has still not been discovered.

3. War

In the preface to Geneva, which he added in 1945, Shaw wrote, "Meanwhile nobody noticed how completely war, as an institution, had reduced itself to absurdity."²⁷ He was attacking another social phenomenon that many believe will, like the poor, always be with us. Shaw is not prepared to accept the existence of either poverty or wars in his world of the future; but he does interpret war as a manifestation of the Life Force which, paradoxically, creates by means of destruction. The seeds of war are present in the essentially aggressive nature of man: "Men will always fight even if they have nothing to fight with but their fists. And the women will egg them on."²⁸ In Geneva, Sir Orpheus Midlander also subscribes to the point of view that accepts war, like accidents in traffic, coal mining, and flying, as an inevitable part of civilized life. He says phlegmatically, "We cannot give it up because of its shocking casualties."²⁹ Bombardone implies that war is needed to maintain the self-respect of the people. In a spirited defence, he condones war as a necessary form of stimulation for the human race. Without fighting men would decay. Since only a percentage die, danger of death only adds zest and reality to the conflict; it is the peril involved which educates us, not merely the bayonet fighting and the fisticuffs. The fighting quality gives war a unique power over the imagination

and, through the imagination, over the character and powers of mankind.³⁰ However, Bombardone has no illusions about war being all glory and bravery:

You find out what a rotten coward you are as well as how brave you are. You learn what it is to be numbed with misery and terror as well as how to laugh at death. (1322)

In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, Prola states that we shall make wars because it is only under the strain of war that we are capable of changing the world, but the changes will never be the changes we intended to make.³¹ Man resists change; he seeks stability in a world whose very nature is that of unceasing change. Only in the fierce emotional involvement of war or catastrophe does he accept new ideas or re-evaluate old concepts. The Life Force overcomes all obstacles which society erects to hamper its growth and development.

In Too True To Be Good, Shaw reveals how war forces man to make changes, and the violence of these reveals his essential nature, stripped of his conventional attitudes. The idealism in which he has disguised himself in order to be bearable to others, says Aubrey, is torn off:

The iron lightning of war has burnt great rents in these angelic veils Our souls go in rags now; and the young are spying through the holes and getting glimpses of the reality that was hidden. And they are not horrified: they exult in having found us out: they expose their own souls But when they have stripped themselves and us utterly naked, will they be able to bear the spectacle? (1167)

The war was certainly instrumental in shattering the

hierarchical structure of the Victorian family, uprooting established institutions and destroying man's image of himself in terms of worth and goal. Aubrey vividly describes modern society:

. . . they are all, like my father here, falling, falling, falling, endlessly and hopelessly through a void in which they can find no footing. There is something fantastic about them, something unreal and perverse, something profoundly unsatisfactory. They are too absurd to be believed in . . . what storyteller, however reckless a liar, would dare to invent figures so improbable as men and women with their minds stripped naked? . . . the horror of the naked mind is still more than we can bear . . . the nakedness of the souls who until now have disguised themselves from one another in beautiful impossible idealisms to enable them to bear one another's company. (1166-7)

Aubrey indicates how the war has forced men to make re-evaluations and mental and spiritual reconstructions; further, he takes a hard look at the basic emotional needs of man's physical self:

Since the war the lower centres have become vocal. And the effect is that of an earthquake. For they speak truths that have never been spoken before--truths that the makers of our domestic institutions have tried to ignore. And now . . . the institutions are rocking and splitting and sundering. They leave us no place to live, no certainties, no workable morality, no heaven, no hell, no commandments, and no God . . .

Most of us seem to have no souls. Or if we have them, they have nothing to hang on to. (1149)

In his search for a new vision, for principles which he can embrace that will make life meaningful again, man strikes out in directions which seem futile. The excitement generated by war, which demands major emotional responses, is duplicated

in peacetime by individuals who perform seemingly senseless acts to affirm their identities. The Countess and Popsy plan robberies; Harry Smiler, who murdered a policeman in Croydon, did so because he was bored by the dullness of his life. Having collected pistols as a hobby, during his boyhood and later in the war, he could not resist the temptation to use one for killing the cop, "just for nothing but the feeling that he'd fired the thing off and done somebody in with it." When asked why, all he could say was that it was a sort of fulfilment.³²

The Patient expresses man's basic need to know that what he is doing has some meaning in the process of evolution. She says:

I want something sensible to do I want my little job like the beaver. If I do nothing but contemplate the universe there is so much in it that is cruel and terrible and wantonly evil, and so much more that is oppressively astronomical and endless and inconceivable and impossible, that I shall just go stark raving mad (1150)

The destructiveness of war has brought about many changes but no prophet to preach a new way of life. Ordinary man is frustrated by inaction, and sometimes, like Harry Smiler, acts in insane ways merely to do something; or he may follow a leader who has enthusiasm but whose goals are not morally sound.

Aubrey has survived the "fiery forcing house" of the war, but he acknowledges himself a preacher without a gospel. He lives in a world of uncertainty, and finds himself crushed and intimidated, but he is not defeated. He makes a

desperate plea for a revelation:

. . . I must have affirmations to preach . . . all I know is that I must find the way of life, for myself and all of us, or we shall surely perish. And meanwhile my gift has possession of me: I must preach and preach and preach no matter how late the hour and how short the day, no matter whether I have nothing to say--or whether in some Pentecostal flame of revelation the Spirit will descend on me and inspire me with a message whereof the sound shall go out into all lands and realize for us at last the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1167)

Aubrey disappears into an impenetrable fog after uttering these words, reminding us of the ancient Jewish scriptures which seem to have survived a number of catastrophes, and to whose principles Shaw continually refers. The world still awaits the Messiah who can affirm and elucidate some spiritual goals which even the simplest of us can comprehend. War has pressed the problem into stark relief but has not revealed the answer.

Politically, the state may make war in order to revitalize the national economy. In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw writes that every tottering regime tries to rally its subjects to its support by war as a last resort. Catherine II of Russia, when faced by a revolt of her subjects, is reported to have said, "Let us give them a little war to amuse them." Shaw continually attacks the political imperceptiveness of the modern nation. If the country is made up for the most part of people too ignorant to understand efficient government, they are taught to measure greatness by pageantry and wholesale slaughter

called military glory. Patriotism is roused to a boiling point by an enemy at the gates. The mass hysteria is a double edged weapon, however; Shaw recalls Napoleon who was first exalted by the idolatry and then smashed by it.³³

When the state was a relatively independent entity, its leaders needed to justify the war only to their own people. In modern times however, a nation may be called to an international tribunal to account for aggression. In Geneva, the three dictators, Bombardone, Battler, and Flanco, are brought before the International Court of Justice. The Judge delivers a withering indictment of their leadership:

Your objective is domination: your weapons fire and poison, starvation and ruin, extermination by every means known to science. You have reduced one another to such a condition of terror that no atrocity makes you recoil and say that you will die rather than commit it. You call this patriotism, courage, glory. There are a thousand good things to be done in your countries. They remain undone for hundreds of years; but the fire and poison are always up to date. If this be not scoundrelism what is scoundrelism? I give you up as hopeless. Man is a failure as a political animal. The creative forces which produce him must produce something better. (1330)

All evidence points to the fact that the greatest progress has been made in the development of weapons of destruction and not in improvement of the human condition. Perhaps this growth will in itself inhibit further aggression:

Men are still what they were; but war has become many times more destructive, not of men, who can be replaced, but of the plant of civilization, the houses and factories . . . and the spare subsistence which we call capital, without which civilized mankind would perish.³⁴

Destruction of enemy installations in the end results in a

problem instead of an achievement for the victors, who are faced with the job of repairing what they have destroyed.³⁵ In a war, both the victors and the vanquished are losers.

The development of the atom bomb added a horrifying new dimension to the already massive range of modern offensive weapons. The Father in Buoyant Billions notes that any man can easily acquire the material to make a world destroying bomb, but the Son counters that there is no need to fear this. Man has not the nerve to go through to the end with what would be murder and suicide. War is a sport too ruinous and vicious for men ennobled by immense power and its splendid possibilities. In reply to his father's comment that power corrupts, the Son answers optimistically:

It does [ennoble] if it is big enough. It is petty power that corrupts petty men. Almighty power will change the world. If the old civilizations, the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, had discovered it, their civilizations would not have collapsed as they did. There would have been no Dark Ages. The world betterers will get the upper hand.
(1371)

Shaw believes that man will not resort to the ultimate forces of destruction. Atomic bombs, like poison gas, will not be used by common consent, mostly because bombs kill women. In Geneva, Battler agrees, "If the object of war is extermination kill the women: the men do not matter."³⁶ This kind of war ceases to be a "glorious sport" showing up a man's mettle. "The object of war," says Bombardone, "is the preservation of man's noblest attribute, courage. The utmost

safety for women, the utmost peril for men: that is the ideal."³⁷ The atom bomb has reduced Bombardone's ideal to an absurdity.

The Son, in Buoyant Billions, hopes that the development of atomic power will help to make world bettering possible, by ridding the world of insect pests like the anopheles mosquito, the tsetse fly, the white ant, and the locust. It will lighten man's labors by giving him the power to "move mountains and straighten rivers in a hand's turn." Seen in a historical perspective, war may be beneficial; somewhat lamely the Son points out that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are already rebuilt and Japan is all the better for the change.³⁸ Shaw tries hard to be optimistic about the usefulness of the new scientific discoveries in effecting progress, but he is beset by doubts. In the preface to Geneva, he writes that man's development of the techniques of annihilation is very great, but the veneer of civilization that distinguishes Europeans from primitive tribesmen is dangerously thin. Fortunately, the magnitude of the peril rouses the other instinct, that the race must not perish. This does not mean that civilization cannot perish. Civilizations have perished over and over again because they have failed to make themselves worth their cost to the masses whom they enslaved.³⁹ Shaw concludes that if the atomic bomb wipes out ours, we shall just have to begin again. It is conceivable that the next great invention may create an

overwhelming interest in pacific civilization and wipe out war. You never can tell.⁴⁰

4. Extermination of the Unfit

Like many geniuses, especially reforming geniuses, Shaw reveals a chronic impatience with the slow learning of the human race. In several of his late plays this pessimism becomes acute. There is an increasing concern with the problem of developing responsibility in the individual, and in the state. He emphasizes the latter in his continuing defence of dictatorships, especially the Communist dictatorship in Russia. Man as government must take direct action to help the process of evolution to achieve its end, which is the perfection of the human race. One way is to allow general intermarriageability by eliminating social barriers, that is, those caused by differences in income, and allowing the Life Force to choose the mates who will produce the best children. Shaw acknowledges the superior power of nature and does not advocate direct government interference in this regard, but he does propose that it must dispose of the flotsam and jetsam of the human race by controlled extermination. "What we are confronted with now," he writes, "is a growing perception that if we desire a certain type of civilization and culture, we must exterminate the kind of people who do not fit into it."⁴¹ Extermination must be put

on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely and apologetically as well as thoroughly. It is a political necessity when a state is confronted by an individual "so ferocious and unscrupulous that he will kill or ruin his neighbors;" however, we need not feel that the result will be wholesale slaughter. Shaw assures us that

the real necessity arises only in dealing with untameable persons who are constitutionally unable to restrain their violent and acquisitive [sic!] impulses, and have no compunction about sacrificing others to their immediate convenience.⁴²

Shaw's defence of extermination paradoxically rests on the very fact that it is, like war, an institution of long standing in civilized life. It is found in nature, as a law of self preservation. In the Sixth Fable of Far-fetched Fables, the Teacher explains:

We have to destroy the locust and the hook worm and the Colorado beetle because, if we did not, they would destroy us. We have to execute criminals who have no conscience and are incorrigible. They are old experiments of the Life Force. They were well intentioned and perhaps necessary at the time. But they are no longer either useful or necessary, and must now be exterminated. They cannot be exterminated by disembodied thought. The mongoose must be inspired to kill the cobra, the chemist to distil poisons, the physicist to make nuclear bombs, others to be big game hunters, judges, executioners, and killers of all sorts
(1401)

We accept extermination as part of the nature cycle, acknowledging that the fittest do survive, and that we must destroy creatures harmful to mankind. However, we are beset by doubts when we are asked to make the same kind of judgments

about humans. We are inhibited by antiquated beliefs, Shaw writes, in the preface to On the Rocks. "The old doctrine of the sacredness of human life, which in our idiot asylums at Darenth and elsewhere still terrifies us into wasting the lives of capable people in preserving the lives of monsters, was only a crude expedient for beginning civilization."⁴³ We discard this idea in dealing with murderers, at present, and we can be taught to extend the range of our unconcern.

Historically, man has always found ways of eliminating those individuals who have been thought to be inimical to the progress of the state in question. In contrast to Joan's earlier plea for an end to society's crucifixion of her saints, Shaw insists that Joan was a dangerous woman. Nor was there any alternative but that Socrates and Jesus be put to death;⁴⁴ the deplorable fact was that Jesus was made to suffer so cruelly. He writes:

Killing can be cruelly or kindly done; and the deliberate choice of cruel ways, and their organization as popular pleasures, is sinful; but the sin is in the cruelty and the enjoyment of it, not the killing.⁴⁵

Shaw pleads that the painless extinction of a life is preferable to the torture of imprisonment.

Shaw implies that a love of cruelty is characteristic of human nature. Our progress is hampered by the anti-Christian vices of punishment, expiation, and sacrifice, hammered into us from childhood. Jesus himself preached

against revenge and punishment which only duplicate wrong, but paradoxically, worship of him includes rituals and replicas of the crucifixion which continually remind us of his suffering; whereas Socrates who was humanely exterminated, is almost forgotten.⁴⁶ The Middle Ages revealed a history of horrifying tortures and barbaric cruelties perpetrated on prisoners; even today we debate about the advantages of flogging criminals. In a really civilized state, says Shaw, flogging would cease because it would be impossible to induce any decent citizen to flog another.⁴⁷ Modern times, too, will leave a record of mass exterminations, such as those of the Jews in Nazi Germany and of the peasants in Russia, and those on a smaller scale like the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and lynching mobs. In a more subtle way, the whole capitalist system engages in extermination, claims Shaw; private proprietors have irresponsible powers of life and death in the state, because they are able to fire laborers at will and evict tenants from their land as they did in England in the eighteenth century.⁴⁸

Shaw praises the Inquisition of the medieval church as an attempt to test fitness to live according to a given set of standards. Now this kind of test is out of fashion, he says. The public does not dream of an economic test except a means test to baffle the attempts of the very poor to become sinecurists like ladies and gentlemen. However, if you assume that a human creature is created for its own

use and has matters arranged so that it will live as long as it can, you will have to make it pay its own way.⁴⁹

The responsibility for deciding who is fit to live is a very serious one. In the long run the power to exterminate is too grave to be left in any hands but those of a thoroughly communist government responsible to the whole community. In fact, Russia has practiced controlled extermination from the beginning of the Communist state. There was a growing necessity for disposing of people who would not or could not fit themselves into the new order of things by conforming to its new morality:

As to building Communism with such trash as the Capitalist system produces it is out of the question. For a Communist Utopia we need a population of Utopians; and Utopians do not grow wild on the bushes nor are they to be picked up in the slums: they have to be cultivated very carefully and expensively. Peasants will not do; yet without the peasants the Communists could never have captured the Russian Revolution.⁵⁰

Russia pruned the Communist tree of its intellectuals and kulaks so effectively, that the economy was almost ruined. The return of the peasants to the land was a victory for private property, but it was short lived as the pogroms of the thirties attested.

Shaw cites the Cheka in Russia as an example of a modern Inquisition. It does not deal with ordinary crimes which are covered by law which, for these offences, has abolished capital punishment. It is concerned with misdemeanors of an ideological nature which involve moral issues.

Shaw argues that it may be impossible to convict some offenders on legal grounds, but quite easy [?] to convince any reasonable body of judges that he is what the people call "a wrong one." The essential questions to be considered are these:

Are you pulling your weight in the social boat?

Are you giving more trouble than you are worth?

Have you earned the privilege of living in a civilized community?⁵¹

Shaw's most closely reasoned and persuasive treatment of the subject of extermination was in his preface to English Prisons Under Local Government by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, published in 1922. He writes:

In a civilized community life is not a matter of course: it can be maintained only on complicated artificial conditions; and whoever enlarges his life by violating these conditions enlarges it at the expense of the lives of others. The extent to which we tolerate such vital embezzlement is at present quite outrageous.⁵²

There must be an increase in the responsibility of the ordinary citizen with regard to his duties and obligations to the state, and of the state with regard to the welfare of its citizens. If people are fit to live, says Shaw, let them live under decent human conditions. If they are not fit to live, kill them in a decent human way. The question of extermination immediately brings up the problem of the borderline between it and wholesale slaughter. Shaw claims that the security against the abuse of this power of life and death was that the Cheka had no interest in liquidating

anybody who could be made publicly useful, all its interests being in the opposite direction.⁵³

Shaw does not make clear who the "wrong ones" are. They range by his definition from "a very small class of human monsters" to the indefinite limits of those giving more trouble than they are worth. He urges, however, that every person who owes his life to civilized society should appear at reasonable intervals before a properly qualified jury to justify his existence. Further, someone must take responsibility for passing judgment. Nowhere does Shaw express this idea as forcefully as he does in his preface to the Webbs' book. He writes:

I am asked at once who is to be trusted with the appalling responsibility of deciding whether a man is to live or die, and what government could be trusted not to kill its enemies under the pretence that they are enemies of society. Such responsibilities must be taken whether we are fit for them or not, if civilized society is to be organized he who has to govern finds that he must either abdicate . . . or take on himself as best he can many of the attributes of God. He must decide what is good and what is evil In short he must do all sorts of things which he is manifestly not ideally fit to do . . . but they must be done, all the same, well or ill, somehow and by somebody.⁵⁴

The fear of extermination would probably produce a great improvement in public morals. Since no state can afford the expense of providing policemen enough to watch everybody continually, restraint must, like the old fear of hell, operate when nobody is looking.⁵⁵ In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, Prola says:

We shall have to justify our existences or perish. We shall live under a constant sense of that responsibility. If the angels fail us we shall set up tribunals of our own from which worthless people will not come out alive. When men no longer fear the judgment of God, they must learn to judge themselves. (1245)

The possibility of liquidation should make us take a serious look at the usefulness of our lives.

Shaw does not foresee the immediate adoption of his proposal. The prejudices against extermination will not be overcome until we acquire a greatly increased intolerance of socially injurious conduct and an abandonment of punishment and its cruelties, together with a sufficient school inculcation of social responsibility to make every citizen conscious of the fact that if his life costs more than it is worth to the community the citizen may be painlessly extinguished. Such improved attitudes would result in a demand for the codification of laws which would dispose of chronic offenders and human nuisances; society must drive a much harder bargain for the privileges of citizenship.⁵⁶

After his serious proposals for extermination in the essay for the Webbs, Shaw did not take up the subject again until 1933, when he devoted the preface to On the Rocks to an elaboration of the theme in the light of the Russian program which was receiving a great deal of criticism. It was not until 1934, however, that Shaw used extermination as part of the plot for a play, The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles. Shaw attempts to recreate, in the play, the old

vision of a day of judgment for all mankind, the vast majority of whom are "neither saints nor scoundrels but borderline cases of extreme psychological complexity."⁵⁷ Shaw recalls Jesus's preaching that all are responsible to divine justice for the use to which their lives are put, but contrary to the standard set in the Gospel, the judgment is not based on faith. An angel appears, literally out of the blue; "but his inquiry is not whether you believe in Tweedledum or Tweedledee but whether you are a social asset or a social nuisance." says Shaw.⁵⁸ The angel announces Judgment Day, "Your records are now being looked into with a view to deciding whether you are worth your stuff or not Then you will simply disappear." Half of the nation is eliminated, judged useless by Shavian and angelic standards. The day after, most of the members of parliament, and many of the "so called useful and popular professions" have disappeared. The medical profession has vanished, but lawyers and clergymen remain. At all events, the "useless, mischievous, selfish, and noisy are dissolving into space." Shaw avoids staging in the play any of the serious problems which are involved when one man would become another man's master in a matter involving life and death. This is the material for tragedy. Instead, he stresses the problem of developing responsibility.

Fear of extermination is useful as a basis for developing genuine moral virtue which can only be learned by

living in full responsibility for our own actions. In the preface to On the Rocks, he writes:

. . . the terror will act as a sort of social conscience which is dangerously lacking at present, and which none of our model educational institutions ever dream of inculcating.⁵⁹

Although the effects of evaluation will be terrifying at first, the fear will wear off as standards of worth get established and known by practice; and there will be no fear of any kind of punishment. In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles the Superfamily is discussing the impending judgment.

Pra says:

Judgment is valuation. Civilizations live by their valuations. If the valuations are false the civilization perishes as all the ancient ones we know of did. We are not being punished today: we are being valued. That is the Newest Dispensation. (1245)

Hyering is optimistic:

I have an uneasy feeling that we'd better get back to our work. I feel pretty sure we shant disappear as long as we're doing something useful What we have learnt here today is that the day of judgment is not the end of the world but the beginning of real human responsibility. (1245)

Final liquidation must be painless and carried out with the greatest possible delicacy. The adoption of extermination is not a present possibility because we have to reckon with the instinctive shrinking from outright killing, which makes so many people sign petitions for the reprieve of even the worst murderers, and takes no interest if the reprieve decrees the slow torture of imprisonment. Shaw conceives of the process of controlled extermination as being

necessary to hasten man's progress to the perfect state. In the Sixth Fable the Teacher points out that the atavistic elements must be destroyed:

Like those children of ours who cannot get beyond the First Form, and grow up to be idiots or savages. We kill them. But we are ourselves a throw-back to the twentieth century, and may be killed as idiots and savages if we meet a later and higher civilization. (1401)

Natural death chooses senselessly, "like a blind child throwing stones." We are all cast off sooner or later in the drive for perfection demanded by the Life Force. However, man can direct his course, at least in part, by controlled extermination.

5. Moral Standards

Shaw attacks the social structure for contributing to the moral chaos of modern man. The capitalist philosophy, by encouraging competition and allowing for a condition of disproportionate income, makes it possible only for the man with an assured living to practice according to high moral principles. Financial status, rather than his essential integrity, determines a man's social position, claims Aubrey, in Too True To Be Good, "If I am bold, unscrupulous, acquisitive, successful and rich, everyone will respect me, admire me, court me, grovel before me."⁶⁰ A rich man can afford the luxury of honesty: a poor man must compromise his morals in order to make a decent living. Shaw reiterates this theme in the preface to On The Rocks. He points out

that the capitalist state provides for the practice of a limited morality. The laws indicate the boundaries of legitimate activity, but other dealings, such as speculating in wheat on the stock market and making mischief between nations are engaged in without hindrance, although they are morally wrong.⁶¹

The growth of capitalism has paralleled the decline in power of other moral forces; for instance, the infallibility of the Bible has long been questioned. The Sergeant in Too True To Be Good dismisses it as "having gone down with those old Jews" but being no longer religion. Ministers of the Gospel seem to be just as confused as the layman. Describing his experience with army padres, he says:

. . . but when you get a real religious chaplain you find he doesnt believe any of the old stuff; and if you get a gentleman, all he cares about is to shew you that he's a real sport and not a mealy mouthed parson. So I have to puzzle it out for myself. (1156)

A result of this kind of spiritual insecurity may be a turning toward atheism.

The Elder is an extreme example of an atheist who has lost his faith in both the old religion and in its nineteenth century substitute, science. He deplores the disintegration of the ancient beliefs, and the deterministic universe of Isaac Newton, that has given way before the criticism of Einstein. The fixed laws, the certainty that all things happened because they must, had given him a faith

that superseded the "Catholic's vain dream of responsible Free Will" and the Protestant's "pretence of private judgment." The calculable world has become one of caprice, and modern man is desperately searching for some universal truths on which to base his beliefs. The Elder says:

Nothing can save us from a perpetual headlong fall into a bottomless abyss but a solid footing of dogma; and we no sooner agree to that than we find that the only trustworthy dogma is that there is no dogma. (1157)

Man appears to be incapable of coping with the essential characteristic of the life process, its continual change, the process of "becoming" that Bergson describes as the *Élan Vital*.

Although the modern Godless state can no longer invoke the sanction of heaven and hell as guides to man's moral growth, Shaw does not dismiss entirely the influences of the churches in this regard. He does not believe that any one conventional religious group can meet the spiritual demands of a complex modern society. Today, even the Catholic Church or the Communist State is an impossible simplification of social organization; it cannot possibly countenance or reconcile such divergent beliefs as those of the Jehovah's Witnesses, William Blake, or the philosophy of Creative Evolution embraced by Shaw himself. Shaw suggests that a variety of religious groups is desirable, indeed necessary. The presence of these various experiences and beliefs forces us to the conclusion that every grade of human intelligence

could be civilized if it were provided with a frame of reference peculiar to its mental capacity and called a religion. In the preface to Farfetched Fables, he writes:

. . . all the established religions in the world are deeply corrupted by the necessity for adapting their original inspired philosophic creeds to the narrow intelligences of illiterate peasants and children.⁶²

In In Good King Charles's Golden Days, Fox, the Quaker, and King Charles explicate this view. Fox presents the extreme Protestant stand which denies the importance of the Church in mediating between God and man. He says:

All, all, all of them. They are snares of the devil. They stand between Man and his Maker, and take on themselves divine powers when they lack divine attributes. (1342)

Charles points out that different creeds are necessary to accommodate the different needs of individuals:

Pastor: it is not given to every man as it has been to you to make a religion for himself. A readymade Church is an indispensable convenience for most of us And there are great mysteries that must be symbolized, because though we feel them we do not know them. (1342)

Differences of religion must be tolerated, analyzed, and as far as possible, reconciled. Our democratic society favors this process, says Shaw, because as human mental capacity varies from grade to grade, those who cannot find a creed which fits their grade have no established creed at all and are ungovernable. This host of creedless voters acts as a strongly conservative force and usefully stabilizes government as such, but it makes reforms very difficult at times.⁶³ The variety of religious sects forces us to

reconcile new ideas with old beliefs. Shaw claims that even his postulate of a provident and purposeful Life Force, that proceeds by trial and error and makes mistakes with the best intentions, is not in effect irreconcilable with the ancient belief in a supernatural benign Providence at war with a malignant Satan.⁶⁴

If Shaw does not concern himself directly with a search for universal moral truths, he persistently attacks the moral double standard which present day society forces upon the individual man. The importance of money in influencing his moral judgments has already been mentioned. There appears to be a wartime and a peacetime morality: the wartime ethic condones killing. In Too True To Be Good, Aubrey says:

As a flying ace I won a very poorly designed silver medal for committing atrocities which were irreconcilable with the profession of a Christian clergyman.

.

I was hardly more than a boy when I first dropped a bomb on a sleeping village Later on I swooped into a street and sent machine gun bullets into a crowd of civilians: women and children and all And now you preach to me about stealing a pearl necklace! Doesnt that seem a little ridiculous? (1159)

To the observation, "That was war," Aubrey passionately replies:

It was me, sergeant, ME. You cannot divide my conscience into a war department and a peace department. Do you suppose that a man who will commit murder for political ends will hesitate to commit theft for personal ends? Do you suppose that you can make a man the mortal enemy of sixty millions of his fellow creatures without making him a little less scrupulous about his next door neighbor? (1159)

Previously wars were fitted into a sort of moral framework. The Sergeant in Too True To Be Good says:

You see, miss, the great principle of soldiering, I take it, is that the world is kept going by the people who want the right thing killing the people who want the wrong thing. When the soldier is doing that, he is doing the work of God (1161)

No longer can the individual discover a sporting justification for his actions: war has become an impersonal mechanized slaughter. He continues:

. . . what comfort is there in screwing on a fuse or pulling a string when the devilment it makes is from three to forty miles off, and you dont know whether you have only made a harmless hole in the ground or blown up a baby in its cradle that might have been your own? (1162)

The nature of modern war has produced violent changes and growth, "we have outgrown our religion, our political system, and our strength of mind and character." The old moral standards have been destroyed.

In the home, the moral double standard operates in the relationship between parents and children. Problems arise because of differences in mental ability. Highly intelligent children of pious families have reacted strongly against their moral upbringing, often rejecting the religion of the home and substituting one just as credulous, says Shaw, like the philosophy of Spencer or Mill. Parents present their children with an idealistic world picture which is contrary to reality. Mrs. Mopply, in Too True To Be Good, discovers this fact almost too late. She says:

My mother told me lies. My nurse told me lies. My governess told me lies. Everybody told me lies. The world is not a bit like what they said it was. I wasn't a bit like what they said I ought to be. I thought I had to pretend. And I needn't have pretended at all.
(1165)

Mrs. Mopply was told to sacrifice herself for others and she would be loved for it; instead she found she was hated for it. She is grateful to the Colonel who showed her how everyone really felt by bashing her on the head with an umbrella. "How am I to behave," she wails, seeing the truth at last, "in a world that's just the opposite of everything I was told about it?" Her daughter is similarly disillusioned and cries for a world without parents and the clinging, cloying mother-daughter relationship.

Parents whose philosophies differ may induce some peculiar moral conformations in their offspring. Aubrey's father, a confirmed atheist, shielded his son from the "corruption" of a religious education; the mother secretly made him read the Bible and memorize three verses a day, with a few whacks thrown in for motivation. This produced some astonishing results. Aubrey confesses:

So I learnt my lesson. Six days on the make, and on the seventh shalt thou rest. I shall spend another six years on the make, and then I shall retire and be a saint
.

A few thousands to the hospitals and the political party funds will buy me a halo as large as Sweetie's sun hat.
(1160)

Curiously, Shaw condones the double standard of

morality in marriage. In the preface to In Good King Charles's Golden Days, Shaw claims that Charles took his marriage very seriously, (as did Magnus in The Apple Cart), and treated his sex adventures as "calls of nature" on an entirely different footing. In this he was in the line of evolution, which leads to an increasing separation of the unique and intensely personal marriage relation from the "carnal intercourse in Shakespeare's sonnets:"

This being a response to the biological decree that the world must be peopled, may arise irresistibly between persons who could not live together enduringly for a week but can produce excellent children. Historians who confuse Charles's feelings for his wife with his appetite for Barbara Villiers do not know chalk from cheese biologically.⁶⁶

Presumably the purpose of both Magnus's and Charles's extramarital affairs was for procreation; this is not indicated in either of the plays.

Magnus considers Orinthia a diversion from the anxieties of family and of royalty. He points out that the differences in the limitations of marriage partners force them to go elsewhere to discuss subjects that cannot be mentioned between them. He does not begrudge Jemima her "Sunday husbands" and goes out of his way to make them feel at ease. In the Ibsen tradition, Shaw treats the women in his plays as individuals, and not merely as physical or romantic conveniences for men. The Sergeant, in Too True To Be Good, reminds us that in any close personal relationship we must be prepared to deal with the total aspect of the partner's

personality. He says:

But when men and women pick up one another for a bit of fun, they find theyve picked up more than they bargained for, because men and women have a top storey as well as a ground floor; and you cant have the one without the other Youve picked up my mind as well as my body; and youve got to explore it. (1155)

Magnus stresses the identity as well as the separateness of the happily married. In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles this identification is most clearly stated in the exchange between Pra and Prola. Prola asks him, teasing, "How often have you said to yourself, 'I could do better alone or with another woman'?" He replies, "All that belongs to the past, to the childhood of our marriage. We have now grown together until we are each of us a part of the other. I no longer think of you as a separate possibility."⁶⁷ Perhaps it is only in the true marriage that the old commandment, "Love one another," can be replaced by the new dictum of the Unexpected Isles, "Be one another."

In the mature relationship the physical has been superseded by the intellectual. Pra continues:

Did you ever really care for me? I know I began as a passion and have ended as a habit, like all husbands; but outside that routine there is a life of the intellect that is quite independent of it. What have I been to you in that life? A help or a hindrance? (1246)

The intellectual life is the true basis for happiness: it is satisfying and permanent. In the long run passion doesn't count.

Aubrey, in Too True To Be Good, hints at an explanation of the moral double standard that confronts man

living in society; there is a conflict between the practical and the ideal. He says:

We all have . . . our lower centres and our higher centres. Our lower centres act: they act with a terrible power that sometimes destroys us; but they don't talk. Speech belongs to the higher centers. In all the great poetry and literature . . . and respectable conversation the higher centers speak, even when they are saying nothing or telling lies. But the lower centers are there all the time: a sort of guilty secret with everyone of us, though they are dumb. (1149)

Wars set free the lower centers of man causing him to act in a way contrary to the dictates of his reason. Similarly, the sex instinct forces him to obey its will. Shaw implies that man is deluded as to the importance of the part played by reason in determining his behavior. He is striving to reach the life of the ideal spiritual world, to escape from the demands of his physical body by minimizing its needs, but its instincts and desires refuse to be submerged; the result is tension and conflict.

How does man find the moral standards which are suitable for his stage of development? Shaw suggests that we must look to our geniuses for guidance. Unfortunately for us, the natural leaders or the supermen are not greatly endowed in all respects. They may display genius in one area only, such as the military or the artistic. They may not be of unimpeachable moral fibre. In Geneva, Sir Orpheus voices a commonly held opinion, "I greatly mistrust advanced people. In my experience, they are very difficult to work with and are often most disreputable in their private lives."⁶⁸ Shaw hastens to assure us that eminence

in a specific department does not imply a similar development in another, nor does personal depravity imply a general depravity. We must learn to use the resources of talented people.

The genius who attempts to lead society is forced to adopt the moral double standard too. One of the puzzles of history, claims Shaw, is whether Jesus really believed His claim to be the Messiah, or was forced to assume that character because he could not make converts on any other terms, just as Mohamet found he could not govern the Arabs without inventing "a very sensual paradise and a very disgusting hell to keep them in order."⁶⁹ Not only does the spiritual leader resort to dissembling but so does the ruler. In wartime he dares not tell the people the truth. Values are so reversed that the dropping of a bomb on innocent women and children is counted as a deed of heroism. The public cheerfully accepts this change from wartime to peacetime standards. In the preface to Farfetched Fables, Shaw states that lies are acceptable when they do the necessary job,⁷⁰ joining such august company as Plato, who, in Book III of The Republic writes that only rulers of the State can lie for the public good.

In Geneva, Shaw discusses the value of the League of Nations as an attempt to conduct government on the international level. He concludes that, in a practical sense,

that of averting conflict, the attempt is a failure, but there is some value in moral sanction and reprimand. The importance of public censure is emphasized by the Judge:

The knowledge that we all live in public, and that there are no longer any secret places where evil things can be done and wicked conspiracies discussed, may produce a great improvement in morals. (1316)

Public censure on an international level threatens the League's very existence, however, because it forces the moral standards of these countries to rise. The fact that any country may be asked to stand up and explain its actions makes moral pressure strong. The great value of the League is in the setting up of the International Court of Justice. Here tensions between governments may be worked out according to law based upon the eternal principles of justice. Here at least is a written code which has not been arbitrarily imposed but worked out in a free discussion.

Shaw's views of the League varied between idealizing its influence and noting its lack of real effectiveness. He wrote that the League can exert pressure although it lacks military power. If the big powers neglect it and the little states cling to it and send the best men they can spare to represent them at it, it may end with the League being dominated at some important crisis by the superior ability of "some hardly perceptible South American republic."⁷¹ The big powers could be reduced to insignificance by the incapacity for internal affairs of the second rate party careerists

who have no business to be in Geneva at all. To be effective the League must be composed of farsighted and able men.

The reform of moral standards is a persistent theme in Shaw; however, changes may result in anarchy. Too often the adoption of a new moral frame results in the emancipation from all the obligations of the old one with a resulting dishonesty and licentiousness. Unfortunately, says Shaw, all revolutionary and reform movements are recruited from those who are not good enough for the existing system, as well as those who are too good for it. All reform movements attract sinners as well as saints, by giving them a prominence as platform orators and pamphleteers out of all proportions to their numbers and deserts. Delinquents justify their actions as assertions of principle and engage in anarchy, irreligion, and sexual promiscuity.⁷²

Besides attracting myriads of adherents of questionable morals, a new system is difficult to reconcile with the existing order. Leaders have difficulty in convincing the common man of the necessity for reform. They are driven to "falsehoods, hypocrisies, and forgeries most distressing to their intellectual consciences." In reviewing church history, Shaw points out that the Church itself has not dared to admit its mistakes lest its whole authority collapse and civilization perish in anarchy.⁷³ The leader

must provide a miracle even if it is faked to that end. Altogether the authorities hopelessly contradict themselves; yet these contradictions are cheerfully swallowed because people are not logical enough to draw subversive inferences. Yet, as Hipney says in On the Rocks, "All this country or any country has to stand between it and blue hell is the consciences of them that are capable of governing it."⁷⁴

Shaw himself does not propose a series of moral commandments. He does, however, continually examine and reject the Christian ethic. In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles Shaw presents a wedding of the Christian and Oriental philosophies. Iddy, short for Idiot, is a Church of England clergyman who arrives at the Unexpected Isles and becomes part of a eugenic experiment, the Superfamily. The six parents, two of whom are Oriental, have produced four children in whom not only the blood but also the cultures have become intermingled. The children, educated in the most enlightened manner, presumably in the best thought of both the east and west, are somehow far from perfect. Though they have an artistic conscience and would rather die than do anything ugly or vulgar or common, they have no moral conscience. Iddy has an overdose of this; he complains, "My terrible conscience has made my life one long remorse; for I never have the strength of

mind to act up to it."⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the marriage of Iddy with Maya and Vashti produces no offspring: Iddy is an impotent simpleton who has become a crushing bore to everyone, but he somehow survives the Judgment. Maya and Vashti disappear.

The central teaching of the New Testament, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," has been superseded by a more advanced creed in the Enlightened Isles. Lady Farwaters tells how the children developed the idea of the Superfamily:

It began by my telling them in my old conventional English way to love oneanother; but they would not have that at all: they said it was vulgar nonsense and made them interfere with oneanother and hate oneanother. Then they hit out for themselves the idea that they were not to love oneanother, but that they were to be oneanother. (1232)

Perfect love casteth out choice: Iddy is forced to choose both Maya and Vashti as mates. The experiment in polygamy includes not only the two girls, however, but their mothers Prola and Lady Farwaters; fortunately, Iddy is too conventional to understand the real meaning of the compact. "Oh how nice and comfortable that would be!" he says. "They would be mothers to me." Prola spares him the truth. She says, "Let him alone, Pra. There is such a thing as calf love. Vashti and Maya are quite enough for him to begin with."⁷⁶ Iddy eventually develops a mature love for Prola; however, the experiment in this super-Christian love turns out to be a failure, too. Everyone becomes tired of Iddy and Iddy becomes tired of love.

"It is a terrible thing to be loved," he says,

. . . a woman who plays the piano all day is a curse. A woman who makes love to you all day is much worse; and yet nothing is lovelier than love, up to a point. We all love one another in a wonderful way: I love Vashti, I love Maya, I love Prola; and they all love me so wonderfully that their three loves are only one love. (1236)

Like Mrs. Mopply, Iddy soon discovers the truth; he is delighted to learn that he is really very much hated. This situation is at least tolerable. The King of Idiots makes another important discovery:

Well, the discovery I have made is that we were commanded to love our enemies because loving is good for us and dreadfully bad for them. (1236-7)

Being loved is a burden, and the falsehood of being idolized is too much to bear. The world will have to try another moral imperative than "Love your neighbor" or we will all turn to hate. In the end, Iddy returns to the Christian religion, "everything that is good and lovely and kind and holy," and the polygamous superchildren disappear on the Day of Judgment as do the "useless people, the mischievous people, the selfish somebodies and the noisy nobodies." Pra and Prola, the eastern mystics, survive. They admit that their experiment for producing a coming race by uniting the blood as well as the philosophy of the east and west, was a failure, but the play ends with a hope for the future. In the Unexpected Isles all plans fail, but there are a million lives beyond all the Milleniums and Utopias that will work to bring about something new.

Shaw believes in a moral code that is pragmatic rather than idealistic; it changes continually. He attacks the conventional and outmoded standards which have been based upon the economic and social inequalities inherent in the capitalistic form of government. Only in Russia, says Shaw in the preface to The Millionairess, which has a single political institution that enables and enjoins the citizen to earn his own living as a matter of elementary honesty, or that does not exalt vast personal riches and the organization of slaughter and conquest above all other conditions and activities, does he have a single standard against which he can be measured.⁷⁷ Paradoxically, Shaw appears to be in favor of a variety of religious creeds as a means of controlling the behavior of the people. Discussing his own theories of Creative Evolution in the preface to On the Rocks, he says that "all the provisional hypotheses may be illusions but if they conduce to beneficial conduct they must be inculcated and acted on by Governments until better ones arrive."⁷⁸ Some manifestations of the Life Force, like the sex instinct, and war, appear to resist rational control. In an essay entitled "Ethical Principles", Shaw writes that the inevitable is practically outside ethics.⁷⁹ The moral standards of the Life Force seem to be beyond the range of human understanding.

The reform of the moral code is a slow process. With

the introduction of new social mores and their acceptance, a new series of heretics will appear. An Inquisition will be set up to examine them. Finally, new precedents and an altered legal code will be adopted. The cycle is continuous and parallels man's evolution as a higher animal. Shaw begs for an open mind with which we can persistently reconsider the "Visions of Judgment," assess the new ideas, and accept the best ones.

6. Self-Improvement

Contrasting with his gloomy portents that man is so loath to change that the Life Force may replace him with something better, Shaw's natural buoyancy elevates his dialectic to the other extreme, that man is continually striving to improve his condition. This persistent belief reveals the influence of the theories of Lamarck, Butler, and others who taught that the organism evolved not by chance, as Darwin suggested, but in response to desire or need. In his Zoological Philosophy, Lamarck writes:

Every new need necessitating new activities for its satisfaction requires the animal either to make more frequent use of some of its parts which it previously used less, and thus greatly to develop and enlarge them; or else to make use of entirely new parts, to which the needs have imperceptibly given birth by efforts of its inner feeling.⁸⁰

For his own purposes Shaw augments Lamarck's theory: man can will to do better, thus become better. This desire for self-improvement is an essential characteristic

of the working of the Life Force in every individual. Don Juan explicates this in Man and Superman:

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding. (385-6)

A stern discipline of mind is required. In On the Rocks, the Lady Healer delivers a lecture on the subject to the prime minister. When he complains that he is overworked, overworried, overstrained, overburdened, and suffering from brain fag, she argues that on the contrary, he is really dying of an acute want of mental exercise. She warns him that unless he exercises his mind he will lose it:

A brain underexercised is far more injurious to health than an underexercised body All sorts of bodily diseases are produced by half used minds; for it is the mind that makes the body: that is my secret and the secret of all true healers. (1196)

Shaw attacks the kind of mental training that the children receive in the British educational system of his time. In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, it receives a tongue lashing from the priest:

He comes from a strange mad country where the young are taught languages that are dead and histories that are lies, but are never told how to eat and drink and clothe themselves and reproduce their species. They worship strange ancient gods; and they play games with balls marvellously well; but of the great game of life they are ignorant. Here, where they are in the midst of life and loveliness, they die by their own hands to escape what they call the horrors. (1223)

Faulty methods and uninspiring teachers fail to recognize, and sometimes actually stifle, the development of the priceless treasure of ability among students. "The enemy of mankind at present," says Shaw, "teachers ask pointless questions, drill, test encyclopedic memory, and show a preference for pedants."

The much touted British universities receive no praise from Shaw. When the prime minister extolls the classical education he received at Harrow, which has produced the most superior minds of best society, the Lady Healer's terse comment is only, "You mean they can all be trusted to say the same thing in the same way when they discuss public affairs." Oxford University comes off rather badly, too, in the exchange between He and the Native in Buoyant Billions. He admits that he acquired his Master of Arts degree by paying "a solid twenty pounds for it" and that a sage teaches candidates all the questions the examiners are likely to ask and the answers they expect. "Unless you are a hundred years behindhand in science and seven hundred in history you cannot hope for a degree there," He concludes.⁸¹

In the preface to The Millionairess, Shaw maintains that schools and universities are the worst offenders for developing closed minds with regard to politics and religion. They do not teach fine art, which they consider unmanly, so the individual is left free to learn about this in adult

life if he is so inclined. But in political science and religion he is proselytized from the beginning in the interest of established institutions, so that he "remains all his life firmly convinced that his greatest contemporaries are rascally and venal agitators, villainous blasphemers, or at best seditious cads." The highly regarded classical education only feeds his mind with empty phrases from the past, says Shaw, and makes him easy prey for any boss who has mastered these and uses them in political speeches. We, as individuals, will be bossridden as long as education means being put through this process. Shaw suggests that the Communist ideal, though it is still encumbered with nineteenth century superstitions, serve as a model; here bosses must be the servants of the rest. The creed of Creative Evolution must be taught to "set the souls of the people free," and to emphasize the interdependence of leaders and their subordinates.⁸²

In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, Shaw imagines a school of the future. The simpleton is told how the four children were taught the wisdom of the east and the west. They were encouraged to invent fairy stories from the time they were tiniest tots. Prola taught them a game called the heavenly parliament in which all of them were told tales and added them to the general stock until a fairyland was built up with laws and religious rituals, called the Superfamily. The children rejected the conventional Christian

dictum, "Love one another" and adopted a more enlightened one, "Be one another." This became their Golden Rule of behavior. The result was a curious combination of altruism and self-love which involved the communal sharing of everything; it included perfect sexual freedom and complete toleration of differences in others.

The community was an attempt to develop individual creativity; although it was a failure, for the combined philosophies failed to produce a moral conscience in any of the children, Pra insisted that the idea was a sound one:

. . . we cannot live in a world of political facts, because we shall not know the political facts for years to come. We must therefore live in a world of original ideas, created by ourselves out of our own nature.
(1238)

The experiment is a bore to everyone; when the original ideas have been exhausted, there is a cry for action, for obedience, for freedom from the intolerable fatigue of thought. Prola orders the children to leave the fool's paradise they have made, and to do anything that is dirty and grubby and smelly enough to show that they live in a real physical world. Her words are greeted with joy. Janga says, "The voice of authority gives us strength and unity. Command us always thus: it is what we need and love."⁸³ Revealed is the perennial conflict between the lower and higher centers. The physical body demands physical action; until the material form is sloughed off in some far distant

development, man cannot live by thought alone.

In Farfetched Fables, the educational system relegates original thinking to its highest form students. The populace has been officially categorized into Anybodies, Mediocrities, and the Upper Ten who live on the Isle of Wight. Here in the anthropometric laboratory, after an analysis of their secretions and reactions, people are properly classified according to their abilities. The testing is compulsory and everyone is assigned to the job he has been acknowledged as being most fit to do. The incorrigible are liquidated.

It is in the Sixth Form that the students are encouraged to do original thinking. Here the teacher no longer questions the pupils; it is their duty to question her. She says, "Is there nothing you want to know? If not, the Sixth Form is not for you: it is out of your mental range; and you can go back to the Fifth Form and take your leaving certificate." All kinds of questions are allowed except those beginning with why; why is unanswerable:

Why is beyond knowledge. All the whys lead to the great interrogation mark that shines forever across the sky like a rainbow. Why do we exist? Why does the universe exist? (1400)

At the end of the class, the teacher assigns a study of the Book of Job and points out that the old god "crushed Job by shewing that he could put ten times as many unanswerable questions to Job as Job could put to him." In a final show

of regimentation, the pupils are marched away in time to music. The riddle of the universe remains unanswered.

The desire for improvement is not confined to the individual: man continually seeks to better himself and his society. In Buoyant Billions, the Father suggests that the Son might well begin world bettering by improving himself. The reply is, "And until I better the world I cannot better myself; for nobody will employ a world betterer as long as there are enough self seekers for all the paying jobs."⁸⁴ The true world betterer wishes to improve conditions for all, regardless of his own comfortable circumstances. Unlike his father, the Son is discontented because others are poor, "To me living in a world of poor and unhappy people is like living in hell."⁸⁵ Like the Egyptian doctor in The Millionaire, the Son feels compelled to leave the world a better place than he found it.

World Betterers are geniuses, who like other gifted people, exhibit only mediocre talent in other fields. Being generally impractical and financially unsuccessful, they survive only because they "marry rich women, take commercial jobs, or sponge on disciples."⁸⁶ More leisure time would be a great boon to them. The Son says:

When atom splitting makes it easy for us to support ourselves as well by two hours work as now by two years, we shall move mountains and straighten rivers in a hand's turn. Then the problem of what to do in our spare time will make life enormously more interesting. No more doubt as to whether life is worth living. Then the world betterers will come into their own. (1371)

The desire to improve the world appears to be characteristic of the genius.

Shaw implies that all great art is inherently didactic. To the artist all else is trifling besides his great labor of creation and interpretation. Kneller in In Good King Charles's Golden Days, insists that the artist is the link between God and man, drawing the images of God and revealing the soul in them. Artists do not need to prove things: they know them. In spite of this knowledge they suffer ill-repute. The father in Buoyant Billions, expresses this view, "My boy, great prophets and poets are all very well; but they are not practical men; and what we need are practical men."⁸⁷ The artist incorporates a vision of God; he, seeing, provides us with a human inspiration which unfortunately, is not visible or comprehensible to all men. Somewhere between must come the great interpreter or teacher, the mediating spirit between the great and small mind. Shaw casts himself in that role. In the preface to Farfetched Fables, he writes:

For instance I am much less mentally gifted than, say, Leibniz, and can only have been needed because, as he was so gifted as to be unintelligible to the mob, it remained for some simpler soul like myself to translate his nomads and his universal substance, as he called the Life Force, into fables which, however farfetched, can at least interest, amuse, and perhaps enlighten those capable of such entertainment, but baffled by Leibniz's algebraic symbols and his philosophic jargon.⁸⁸

Indeed Shaw's own purpose appears to be to amuse his audience by means of his plays, but the reforming spirit

informs his prefaces. Here he deals seriously with the great problems of man and his society and also with such simple aids to efficiency as a revised alphabet and an improved number system.

At the end of Buoyant Billions, the Son resolves to embrace the thankless job of world bettering, one that is always unsuccessful. His future career will involve spending most of his life hiding from the police, and perhaps finishing on the scaffold, but he has sided with Shaw's great company, which includes Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Ruskin, Plato, Confucius, Gautama, Jesus, Mohamet, Luther, and William Morris.⁸⁹

7. Man's Progress

Characteristic of Shaw's late plays is a dwindling of hope, an old philosopher's pessimism about life and the progress of the world. Those who have drunk of the cup of optimism need only to observe the man-made horrors of the twentieth century. In Buoyant Billions, the Son says:

. . . within the last thirty years we have had more horrible persecutions and massacres, more diabolical tortures and crucifixions, more slaughter and destruction than Attila and Genghis Khan and all the other scourges of God ever ventured on. I tell you, if people only knew the history of their own times they would die of horror at their own wickedness. (1370)

Man is still a victim of his own emotions and is not capable of being governed by abstract thought. In the preface to

Farfetched Fables, Shaw says, "Our inborn sense of right and wrong, of grace and sin, must be embodied for us in a supernatural ruler of the universe: omnipotent, omniscient, all wise, all benevolent. To continue the symbolism, a host of minor gods sprang up, including a diabolical host and Satan. Thus the world as we imagine it is crowded with anthropomorphic supernatural beings of whose existence there is no scientific proof. Nonetheless without such belief the human race cannot be civilized and governed; the ten percent or so of persons mentally capable of civilizing and governing are mostly too clever to be improved on by the fairy tales, and in any case have to deal with the hard facts as well as the fancies and the fictions."⁹⁰ Further, man does not appear to be able to cope with the truth. Rulers, kings, and priests are driven to falsehoods, hypocrisies, and forgeries in order to maintain control. People demand miracles, they are not logical enough to draw subversive inferences, and they swallow contradictions cheerfully.

However, in spite of his many gloomy predictions, Shaw is essentially optimistic about the future of mankind. In his last long play, Buoyant Billions, written when he was ninety-two, the Son says, "At first sight there is no hope for civilization At second sight the world has a future that will make its people look back on us as a mob

of starving savages."⁹¹ Shaw foresees man progressing by developing his mind and minimizing the demands of his physical body. Modern man experiences a tremendous conflict between his higher and his lower centers, his will to act in a reasonable manner being circumvented by the intensity of his emotions and physical drives. In the distant future setting of Farfetched Fables, the Hermaphrodite says:

We must get rid of our physical bodies altogether.
 . . . I want to be a mind and nothing but a mind. In the sixteenth century, men made it their first article of religion to worship a god who had neither body, parts, nor passions: sensual passions. Even in the dark ages of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a man who aspired to be a vortex in thought, and a woman who declared that the mind made the body and not the body the mind. Demolish all the laboratories. Build temples in which we can pray and pray and pray for deliverance from our bodies until the change occurs naturally as all real changes do. (1398)

Shaw envisions the future history of man as a series of civilizations, some of which are likely to be atavistic, that is, not an advance on the previous one but a throw-back to an earlier form. In the Sixth Fable, Youth I is nonplussed to learn that his civilization, which he thought was the last step in Creative Evolution, is instead only a survival of twentieth century mankind, "no better than the black beetles compared with another race of Superman who have evolved into the Disembodied." In reply to the comment that they would surely have been killed off by that superior race, the first Youth remarks, "They may be keeping us for their amusement as we keep our pets. I told you the universe is a joke."⁹²

The history of the Superior Race indicates that they got rid of their tails, fur, and teeth, acquired thumbs and enlarged their brains. Later they found they could live on air, so they avoided eating and drinking because these caused diseases which killed them. The Teacher explains that these Disembodied Races still exist as Thought Vortexes, who "are penetrating our thick skulls in their continual pursuit of knowledge and power, since they need our hands and brains as tools in that pursuit."⁹³ Ironically, progress seems to have defeated its own purpose, since the physical bodies which the Disembodied Races have sloughed off have some use after all.

In the Sixth Fable Raphael appears; he is an incarnation of one of the Disembodied Spirits, "what you call the word made flesh." He confirms the fact that evolution can progress in two ways, if the body can become a vortex, the vortex can become a body as he has done. Raphael must, however, restrain his intense magnetic field. "If I turned it on it would kill you," he says.⁹⁴ In his human guise Raphael stops short of eating and drinking and the "revolting habit of human reproduction." To the Maiden's observation that Vortexes have no passion, he replies, "On the contrary; intellectual passion, mathematical passion, passion for discovery and exploration: the mightiest of all the passions."⁹⁵ The only passion he shares with the humans

is the passion for teaching, yet his purpose in visiting them is to learn.

Though Shaw seems to foresee a future world of abstract thought and cold logic, he denies that the world of the intellect is devoid of emotion. Second Born in Buoyant Billions rises to the defence of the mathematicians:

And who dares say that mathematics and reasoning are not passions? Mathematic perception is the noblest of all the faculties! . . . Will you set above this great passion the vulgar concupiscences of Don Juan and Casanova, and the romance of Beatrice and Francesca, of Irish Deirdre, the greatest bores in literature, mere names incidentally immortalized by a few lines in a great poem? (1389)

Shaw rejects the assumption that "Love makes the world go round" in both the Romantic and the Christian sense. This notion belongs to the infancy of the world's evolution, "to the childhood of our marriage," as Pra had said. There is something better. Second Born elucidates:

God is not love; love is not Enough: the appetite for more truth, more knowledge, for measurement and precision, is far more universal: even the dumbest fools have some glimmer of it Love turns to hate in its terrible reactions. Mathematical passion alone has no reaction: our pleasure in it promises a development in which Life will be an intellectual ecstasy surpassing the ecstasies of the saints. (1300)

Although future man will exercise many more controls over nature and the world around him, he does not seem to be able to foresee his future goals any more clearly than his primitive twentieth century counterpart. In the Fifth Fable, set in the Genetic Institute, Rose points out that

although man has progressed to the point of being able to manufacture people scientifically, he still has problems in producing what he wants:

We all want the Just Man Made Perfect; but when our chemists ask us for an exact prescription of the necessary protoplasms, hormones, vitamins, enzymes and the rest, we never agree on the last milligram of each ingredient; and it is that milligram that determines whether the resulting product will be a poet or a mathematician. (1398)

The Hermaphrodite insists that bodies be replaced by minds, but Rose argues that we should still be unable to agree what sort of mind we would be; "prayer is a great creative power, but to pray effectively, you must know what to pray for." Future man, too, must learn by trial and error.

Future evolution presses man to becoming all mind. Signs of this tendency have been evident throughout history. Rose recalls the ideals of those living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

In spite of their sensual ecstasies, they had decency enough to reserve their highest veneration for persons who abstained from them, exalting them under the special titles of saints, nuns, priests, angels, gods and the like. (1397-8)

Rose might have quoted the nineteenth century's most famous iconoclast Charles Darwin, who privately predicted the future development of mankind in these words, in a conversation with his friend Chudleigh shortly before his death:

Give the world time, an infinite number of epochs, and according to its past and present system, like the coming tide each epoch will advance on each, but so slowly that it can hardly be traced, man's body becoming finer to bear his finer mind, till man becomes not only an angel but an archangel.⁹⁶

No one in the school of the future can answer the question as to where the desire to get rid of the physical body came from, or what is the future of Disembodied Thoughts. Youth II asks, "Do these disembodied thoughts die when their number is up as we do? If not there can hardly be room for them in the universe after all these millions of centuries."⁹⁷ The answer lies somewhere in the future. We only know that the Life Force presses man to become a disembodied thought, an immortal soul, striving to acquire more knowledge and more power.

IV

CONCLUSION

Shaw early expressed his firm belief in the didactic purpose of the artist. In a City Temple lecture which he gave in 1908, he says:

When a man writes a drama or a book or preaches a sermon or employs any other method of art, what he really does is to take the events of life out of the accidental, irrelevant, chaotic way in which they happen, and to rearrange them in such a way as to reveal their essential and spiritual relations to one another. Leaving out all that is irrelevant, he has to connect the significant facts by chains of reasoning and also to make, as it were bridges of feeling between them by a sort of ladder, get the whole thing in connected form into your head and give you a spiritual, political, social or religious consciousness.¹

Shaw had cast himself in the role of reformer in two ways, as an artist who presented new ideas concerning the meaning of life, and as a politician who was convinced that the form of society must change before man could progress. In the late plays, he continued to give the world a sense of spiritual, political, social, and religious consciousness, expressing in the process all the doubts and inconclusiveness which resulted from the conflict between the rational and the intuitive faculties in his own nature. The artist used his intuition to write the plays, the reformer wrote the prefaces to explain them.

Shaw was a nineteenth century writer who found a mental and spiritual affinity with the philosophy and science

of his age. He was aware of the enormous power and creativity of nature expressed in such varied terms as those of Nietzsche and Darwin, and accepted the importance of man in the universe, scientifically infinitesimal in value, intellectually having a tremendous potential for power and control over nature and society. The theory of Creative Evolution provided him with a philosophy which explained to his satisfaction the major problems of the world, the purpose of life, the power that makes men act, the nature of good and evil, the need for the organization of society, and man's final goal.

Creative Evolution is more than a scientific theory for Shaw; it is a religion. In a message to The Shaw Society of America, on the occasion of its founding in 1950, Shaw said:

I helped to get the religion of Creative Evolution with its feet on the ground because I saw that no established religion in the world is wholly credible, and that without religion men are political timeservers and cowards.²

Religion is fundamentally a consciousness of purpose, an awareness of one's participation in the mainstream of life. The Life Force might be imagined as a god engaged in some gigantic Herculean labor, insinuating himself into a sea of matter, emerging at last, refined and strengthened by knowledge and power, as Pure Intelligence. There is a serious disproportion between work and result, a great effort which most often runs short, stifled by habit, paralyzed by contrary forces, diverted from what it should do by what it

does, absorbed by the form it is engaged in making. Even in its most perfect forms it is at the mercy of the materiality it had to assume. Life tends towards action, materiality tends to solidify; there is a perennial conflict between change and permanence. Shaw's characters are involved in a great struggle against the materialism of the physical body, and the external forces, individual and social, which inhibit their development in realizing their great purpose. The heroes are essentially men of action: writers, artists, politicians, business tycoons, saints, and warriors. Shaw is not concerned with the personal problems of the individual soul, such as sin, temptation, remorse, pity, or fear. The man in the grip of the Life Force is preoccupied with doing his WORK, and the problems he faces are the conventions, institutions, and the lack of knowledge that impede his progress.

The most powerful manifestation of the Life Force is in the sex instinct. This is irresistible since it is instrumental in producing the future generations, each a refinement over the previous one, by means of which the Life Force can do its work. Shaw discards the sentimental nineteenth century view of the sex instinct; he denies that its presence is a valid basis for marriage, which is a social, not a natural, institution. The Life Force is not concerned with the conventional family unit as such; it is interested in producing better children, not in caring for

them or educating them. The practical solution is marriages and concubinages. Shaw emphasizes that true marriage, as a mystical union, is a partnership of minds and is a notable intellectual achievement in itself.

Shaw has been criticized for presenting woman as a creature whose sole purpose in life is to await impregnation.³ On the contrary, he rejects the timid, retiring, Victorian heroine for a bold, pursuing one. It is true that he explains the general strength and optimism of women in terms of evolutionary function and identifies this purpose in them as superseding all others in importance. However, his presentation of their abilities in leadership, invention, and powers of work has never indicated that these are in any way inferior to those of men. Shaw's emancipated woman is still far from being realized as the advanced woman of this decade.

Although the sex instinct is strongest in woman, life's primary purpose for men is the struggle for more knowledge and greater power. A central theme in Shaw is the impact of the gifted individual on society. Conflict results from the imposition of his unorthodox belief upon established mores. Regarding the genius as a "ghost from the future" who represents human possibility and hope, Shaw begs for the utmost freedom for development for him and for mankind. The genius is superior in at least one form of intelligence though he may be inferior in other endowments.

Because of this intelligence, which Shaw accepts as being the final development of man, parting company here with Bergson and Butler who value instinct more highly, Shaw persistently defended the geniuses. He praised the European dictators as Great Men who could do no wrong. However, although he made continual excuses for the pogroms of Nazi Germany and of Communist Russia which involved the slaughter of thousands of apparently ordinary people, he was moved to genuine outrage over the treatment the Nazis accorded to Einstein, a great pioneer in thought.⁴

The individual requires freedom to develop his potential. Shaw is critical of the inhibiting factors, the tyranny of convention-bound human relationships, the parental indoctrination of outmoded ideas, the inadequate education received in the school, the marriage relationship in which the woman depends on the man for her source of income. He attacks the moral dishonesty of the Church which hesitates to alter its beliefs in conformity with new discoveries for fear of losing its authority. Worst of all are the disabling effects of a social system which enslaves man without providing him with a good life in return for his labors, and fails to use its resources to rid society of pestilence, war, and poverty. Life must be permitted to develop to the full. Shaw is confident that the promptings of the Life Force direct its progress always to the good; otherwise, the race

would destroy itself. Yet the will to destruction is inherent in the nature of the Life Force. Early experiments which have outlived their usefulness may be inimical to its progress. They are the evils of the world; so are the peculiar forms which are the mistakes made by the Life Force in its trial and error method. Man is morally responsible to live creatively, but he must also destroy harmful insects, beasts, and even men. The Sergeant insists that a soldier is doing the work of God when he is killing the people who want the wrong thing.⁵ What he must not do is to cause pain or suffering or operate from motives of punishment or revenge.

Motivation for action must come from the conscience within, the Life Force directing the action. In a talk, "Modern Religion," Shaw emphasizes the primary responsibility of every individual to search continually for the message of the Life Force within himself. Shaw's vision is an inspiring one. He says:

We may hope this evaluation of life may go on and if we begin to worship life, if we begin to try to get a community in which life is given every possible chance, and in which the development of life is the one thing that is everybody's religion, then cooperation with this power becomes your religion; you begin to feel your hands are the hands of God, as it were, your mind is the mind of God, that he made your mind in order to work with The moment you clear up people's minds and make them conscious of this, the moment you discover that the roots of this religion are in every person you may get a common bond all over the empire.⁶

The sense of duty in the person who works steadily to

accomplish the purpose set out for him by the Life Force, need not be represented for him externally by social conventions. Having discovered the purpose of the universe, and identified his own goals with it, the individual makes the process of achievement an act, not of self sacrifice but of self realization.

Unfortunately, self realization is not always possible. The gifted individuals find a strong well-spring of the Life Force within themselves and are impelled by it into action; the less endowed may fail to discover their purpose, or to see their goals and find themselves inadequate to fulfill them, as in Too True To Be Good. In this play, Shaw achieves a rare intimacy in dealing with the personal problems of his characters, who live in the years following the First World War. To a man of seventy-six, the most striking characteristic of this generation is its nakedness, physical and spiritual; he notes the insistent demands of the physical body, and the spiritual poverty which produces anguish without hope of alleviation. Here, and in The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, and On the Rocks, is another image, that of impotence and frustration, literally and figuratively in the case of the simpleton, and in other cases revealed as an inability to discover or carry out the purpose. In Too True To Be Good, Aubrey is frustrated as a preacher without a gospel, the colonel as a soldier who must by convention, delegate all action to his subordinates, and the patient as

a woman without satisfying work to do. In The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, the four children give up a life of contemplation and beg for freedom from the intolerable fatigue of thought, demanding orders and action, dirt and hard work as a means of self-identification. In On the Rocks, the prime minister, faced with the task of reforming the government in accordance with the socialist principles taught him by the Lady Healer, gives up, realizing that he is not the man for the job. He plans to retire somewhere near a golf links to await a dictator who will come along and solve all problems. Even on the international level, the League is presented as an agency without a real power to act.

Shaw's sympathies are persistently with the individual rather than with the state. In this respect he may be called anti-social, preferring dictators to democracies, personal interpretation of conscience to that of churches, and the gifted individual to the mass. He maintains that we must await the Superman to give us further guidance. Unlike Nietzsche's idea of Supermen as a kind of elite, Shaw's concept emphasizes the interdependence of the leader, who knows what should be done, and his followers, who know how to do it. Curiously enough, in the Shavian Utopia of the Unexpected Isles, the geniuses are segregated from the rest of society; Shaw thus neatly answers Joan's plea that

society learn to tolerate her saints. The Isle of Wight is used exclusively by the Upper Ten (ten percent of society, I assume). The geniuses, bred to their natural limit, are separated from the rest of society to do the work for which they are best fitted, the classification and organization of the state.

The intellectual principle in man strives to find order in a seemingly chaotic universe in terms comprehensible to himself, to discover the pattern of change, to regulate his environment, institutions, and human relationships so that he can control evolutionary development. A result is conflict between man's will and the cosmic will, arising out of the individual's ignorance of the cosmic pattern. Man struggles ceaselessly to discover the direction of human progress. In Shaw, a passion for order, represented by society, resulted in a conflict with his natural desire to develop without restraint. However, to the perennial question, "Are the aims of man and nature compatible?" he would have answered, "Yes."

Shaw believed that man cannot be better than his society; therefore, social reform must precede individual improvement. He continually attacks contemporary evils which, he claims, are caused primarily by capitalist democracy. As a result, his social reform is primarily economic. In his contributory chapter to Shaw, the Villager and Human Being, Archibald Henderson quotes Shaw as saying, "In all my plays my economic studies have played as important

a part as a knowledge of anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo."⁷ Fortunately, the artist in Shaw took precedence over the reformer, and in the best plays the fusion of form, character, and idea produced artistic masterpieces. Many of the later works reveal the weakness of self conscious morality plays, when they appear to be rather transparent vehicles for the propaganda of a militant reformer.

Although Shaw believes that actual reforms are produced only by gifted individuals as leaders, dictators, and bosses, a form of government must exist which can be operated by "dunderheads doing what was done the last time" in the intervals between the appearance of popular idols. In effecting any kind of progress, democracy is useless, because of the haphazard choice of candidates, and the inherent inefficiency of the parliamentary system. The two party system prevents the accomplishment of any real work because measures brought before the House are never considered on their merits, but the vote is solely on the question of whether all the members of the House shall be put to the expense and trouble of an immediate election at which their seats will be at stake. The increase in the size of governments requires a greater division of labor and function among rulers. Universal suffrage as a method of choosing rulers is deplored because the very qualities that enable a candidate to win elections are not those which will

make him a good leader. In "The Revolutionist's Handbook" Shaw had written:

If the lesser mind could measure the greater as a footrule can measure a pyramid there would be finality in universal suffrage. As it is the political problem remains unsolved.⁸

In the preface to Farfetched Fables, Shaw proposes an anthropometric test for evaluating leadership, but he admits that there is no way in which one may assess the "unconscious genius" without which all the other talents are of no avail. Further, it is impossible to know beforehand whether the candidate will be ennobled or corrupted by the acquisition of power. Selfish or vicious tendencies may be subdued by the crushing demands of the responsibility of office; however, the leader may go mad with power unless he is an extraordinary being who is a rarity. Since we are unable to discover this rare personage, we must build up a system of controls, in case he does go mad. There is no danger as long as every leader is aware that his time in office depends upon his ability and efficiency.

Shaw believes that socialism is the answer to the problem of good government. Nineteenth century defenders of capitalist democracy such as Spencer, Tucker, and Prince Kropotkin maintained that competition was an all powerful automatic natural regulator, and that self interest would bring order out of chaos. Shaw writes:

They loved to believe that a right and just social order was not an artificial and painfully maintained legal edifice, but a spontaneous outcome of the freeplay of the forces of nature.⁹

The resultant democracy, as an attempt at government by the many, is defended in spite of historical evidence that the many have always been governed by the few. After a visit to Russia in 1931, Shaw had nothing but praise for the Communist program. Based on the hierarchical concept similar to that found in the Catholic Church, it utilized the talents of individuals with a gift for leadership, who had had long apprenticeship and training. Shaw was convinced that it was a responsible moral government, acting only in the best interests of its citizens, demanding that everyone do a fair share of work, and paying a just return for that labor. In his enthusiasm, Shaw overlooked its weakness, procrastinated as to its seriousness, or in more perceptive moments shrugged off calamities as if they were unimportant miscalculations, common to all forms of rule.¹⁰

Another aspect of the tension between intuition and intellect is revealed in Shaw's uneasy truce between his ideas of liberty and control. He defended freedom of speech and equality before the law. Government must be organized so freely that the leader could "gravitate" to the top, but we must have "a rope around his neck"¹¹ in order to control him. There must be tolerance for the heretic, and extermination of the incorrigible. Educationists must encourage original thinking in their students, and there must be proselytizing by the state. It is deplorable the average citizen believes everything that he is told, illogical though

it be; however, the leader must exercise deception in order to maintain his hold over the electorate. Shaw reveled in the wonderful variety and diversity of human life, and also preached the ideal of the carefully classified state, purged of all disturbing influences. Shaw's concern was mainly for economic liberty rather than for political liberty. He argued that equality of income would result in true liberty because the reduction of the number of hours of work would give man more free time. Thus liberty, equated with leisure, is a worthwhile economic goal; the great sin is idleness: Shaw fails to distinguish between the two. Unhappily, even freedom from want does not encourage man to use his leisure time in pursuits that will increase his knowledge and power.

The most repugnant of Shaw's proposed methods of control is, undoubtedly, his proposal to exterminate the unfit. We are unmoved by his pleas that very few will suffer this fate, that the idea has already been put into practice in the form of executions, lynchings, and wars, and that imprisonment, which is torture, is far worse. We would disagree that the idea of the sacredness of human life is an outmoded belief; yet many people today sympathized with the parents who killed their thalidamide baby, and consider euthanasia, legal abortions, and birth control as kindly practices. There is a curious disparity between Shaw's inveterate love of life and his rejection of the

belief that life itself, in any form, no matter how simple or diverse or distorted, has some worth and meaning, and if nothing else, aids us in the pursuit of the knowledge of itself. Further, he failed to explain how the killing of the relatively few.(by his own admission), could noticeably improve the condition of the many who remained. Nor did Shaw suggest an anthropometric test to choose the executioners who would have the awful responsibility for making the judgments. If Shaw did not have the answers, he at least was courageous enough to propose that the state should make some demands upon its citizens for responsible behavior, and that each individual be called upon to evaluate his worth to society in some manner. Shaw completely rejects the idea of love as a persuading force and substitutes fear instead.

He interprets love scientifically as the sex instinct, rationally as a desire for self improvement and world bettering, and as an aspect of the cosmic will-to-good, the impersonal benevolence of the Life Force. In his war against love as a sentimental passion, he chose to disregard its other aspect as a form of dependence and benevolent social concern which make the intangible difference between a society and a group of individuals. Shaw was not concerned with exploring the nature of loyalty, friendship, personal tolerance as long-suffering, patience, or affection. It is of the nature of love to ignore equality, to pay more

than it owes, to give more than it receives. It is only a need for others and mutual dependence which make society possible. In Shaw's future state, there appear to be groups of people, but no society in this respect. The Ancients in Back to Methuselah, evince no interest in public affairs; like the Disembodied Spirits in Farfetched Fables, they appear to be engaged in a private intellectual passion too intense for us to imagine.

In his persistent criticism of Christianity, Shaw condemns the central tenet, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," as an impossible commandment; the Christian philosophy, as a religion or the basis for a form of social organization, is declared impractical simply because no state has ever constituted itself on its principles. He repudiates the ideas of mercy, forgiveness of sin, and atonement.¹² Punishment only duplicates wrong; there can be no equalization of spiritual income in this Puritannical concept of complete individual responsibility. The ascetic and the sentimental ideals of Christianity are rejected in favor of rational ethics and independent judgment in matters of conduct.

In spite of his staunch belief that the solution to the major problems of modern society lies in the equalization of income through socialism, Shaw is not concerned with man's progress in the material sense. He foresees a

growth in the spirit of man, in the increase of self consciousness, but he does not give us any insight into his development in the social, humanitarian, or ethical sense. Modern writers have advanced the view that man, as a physical being, has probably developed to his ultimate limit, that further evolution must be in the direction of the organization of society.¹³ Shaw's view appears to differ from this. Although, in the distant future setting of The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, and Farfetched Fables, we have evidence of highly stratified states, the final goal of man is the isolation of Disembodied Thought. Society disappears. It would appear that the socialist state is the short term solution which removes the obstacles and allows for the most complete development of the individual.

Future evolution into the Pure Intelligence of Disembodied Thought appears to be a negative aspiration for modern man. No doubt some would prefer the happiness state of Huxley's Brave New World, where soma pills are available to induce oblivion when all desires are fulfilled and happiness becomes too much to bear. Others might prefer Orwell's state of revenge, cruelty, torture, and the sadistic use of power to produce suffering, which keep men subservient in an atmosphere of fear and stupidity in 1984. Shaw's Utopia is a regimented society whose goal is neither a striving for happiness nor for physical power, but a constant search

for self knowledge and self realization through the assumption of individual responsibility. Shaw assures us that the Life Force is a positive power aiming at a worthwhile goal. He suggests that we will achieve immortality, no matter what we believe, because we are the beginning, middle, and end, the past, present, and future, becoming in an inexplicable frame of time, a final perfection. If we believe in an evolving God, we must find our happiness in developing our own essential natures to the utmost. We must ever look inwardly to find the source of the great power within us and submit to the direction of the Life Force. The moral imperative is to dedicate our lives wholly to the performance of our given work.

The thought of living in a regimented society fills us with misgiving. Shaw stated the problem himself: no matter what the form of government, we are, in the end, at the mercy of the consciences of the governors. In spite of Shaw's persuasion that the Communist Government is a model of responsibility, goodwill and benevolence, we distrust the state in whose philosophy mercy and forgiveness have no part, and in which the individual may be liquidated outside the law. We need a larger vision of society than Shaw's, one which makes room for both the respectable citizens and the misfits, by an acquisition of knowledge and power, derived from an understanding of all individuals.

As a thinker, Shaw never made claim to any original ideas: he saw himself rather as an interpreter. He disclaimed any novelty in the matter of reform, pointing out that his proposed changes exist, in part and under different names, in our present society. What he calls extermination, is only execution; socialism is present in the nationalization of essential services and in government subsidy; we are used to dictatorships because we already have bosses of every description. He cheerfully acknowledges his debts to Butler and Bergson, Shelley and Blake, Marx, Jevons, and the Webbs, to name only a few. In Sixteen Self Sketches, he points out that even his philosophy of Creative Evolution is not so radical as one might think. Here, he writes that the problems of the Churches arise from their postulate of God as a benevolent omnipotence. In the light of world conditions it is obvious that God Almighty is either not almighty or not benevolent. They

have to reckon with the operation of a natural agency which the Churches call Providence I have called it the Life Force and the Evolutionary Appetite, Bergson called it the Elan Vital, Kant the Categorical Imperative, Shakespear, the "divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." They all come to the same thing: a mysterious drive towards greater power over circumstances and deeper understanding of Nature, in pursuit of which men and women will risk death as explorers or martyrs, and sacrifice their personal comfort and safety against all prudence, all probability, all common sense.¹⁴

In a talk entitled "Smoke and Genius," Shaw defined a man of genius, not as a man who sees more than other men do,

but one who understands the importance of the things he does see.¹⁵ Shaw himself, persistently attempts to widen our vision and increase our understanding of the problems of man and his society. Some wag has called Shaw's plays a conflict between a lot of average people and an intellectual Superman,¹⁶ a comment which merely points out the essentials of his dramatic technique. However, the results are a transformation of values among the average people in both the play and in the audience. While asking us to reconsider our old beliefs, he makes some suggestions. The passion of love is merely an instinct; patriotism is an inducement to war rather than a deterrent. Let us substitute for "Love one another," the command, "Be one another;" then, we can progress from an impersonal criticism to a deeper understanding and self-identification with others. Similarly, the larger concept of supernationalism serves to show man that he is one with all men through whom the power of the Life Force evolves at last into a god.

In the preface to Buoyant Billions, Shaw writes, testily:

My readers keep complaining in private letters and public criticisms that I have not solved all the problems of the universe for them like Newton, all I know is but a grain of sand picked up on the verge of the ocean of undiscovered knowledge"17

As a critic of society "impressed by an awful sense of duty",¹⁸

Shaw asked many questions and gave many answers. In an

article written for the New Statesman and Nation, Peter Ustinov writes:

The genius of Shakespear was to ask questions which the world would be presumptuous to try to answer. The genius of Shaw is to have the presumption to answer them.¹⁹

We may be appalled by the kinds of questions Shaw asks, and the answers that he gives. We may deplore his physical and mental detachment that came with old age; we may say that Shaw failed to change with the times, and to reconsider the conceptions that had been valid for him all his life. We may argue that he gave wrong answers to all the important questions of the Twentieth Century. At least he looked courageously and optimistically at them, and dared to give some practical answers that may shock us into seriously considering the problems themselves. It remains for future generations, perhaps a century from now, to assess his worth as a playwright and a prophet. He may be remembered because he created a memorable gallery of characters, presenting a variety of ideas in brilliant argument, or because of the rightness of his prophecies, or, perhaps, for both. You never can tell.

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